DRYDEN

Of Dramatic Poesy

AND OTHER CRITICAL ESSAYS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME TWO



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VOLUME TWO

OF DRAMATIC POESY
and Other Critical Essays

By John Dryden

Edited with an Introduction by GEORGE WATSON

This is the first complete edition of Dryden's Criticism, and collects for the first time the whole of his critical writings in whatever form they have survived—prefaces, essays, prologues, epilogues, letters and private notes. They are fully annotated, and the Introduction reassesses Dryden's claim to be considered, in Johnson's words, 'the father of English criticism'. A Glossary of Critical Terms analyses Dryden's varied use of key-terms such as 'fancy' and 'wit'. There are fifty-two items included entire with four exceptions: the three classical lives of Plutarch (1683), Polybius (1693) and Lucian (1711), and the preface to the Aeneis (1697), all of which contain bulky material explicitly translated or adapted from continental treatises and commentaries.

The editor, George Watson, is a lecturer in English at Cambridge University and a Fellow of St John's College.

Wrapper drawing by Lathey





EVERYMAN, I will go with thee,

and be thy guide,

In thy most need to go by thy side

JOHN DRYDEN

Born in Northamptonshire in 1631 and educated at Westminster School and Trinity College, Cambridge. Settled in London in 1657 and wrote complimentary verses on the death of Cromwell and the Restoration of Charles II (1660). His first play was acted in 1663, and he wrote many heroic plays and comedies before 1681, when he turned to verse satire with *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681–2), *The Medal* (1682) and *Mac Flecknoe* (1682). Appointed Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal in 1670, he became a Catholic soon after the accession of James II in 1685, and was deprived of both posts with the Revolution of 1689. For the last decade of his life he lived in industrious retirement, translating Juvenal and Persius (1693), Virgil (1697) and the *Fables* (1700) from Homer, Ovid, Boccaccio and Chaucer. Died in 1700.

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VOLUME II

THE LIFE OF PLUTARCH

Written by Mr Dryden

Prefixed to *Plutarch's Lives, Translated from the Greek by Several Hands* (1683)

THREE KINDS OF HISTORY—BIOGRAPHY—PROSE STYLE

Text: 8°, 1683.

Plutarch's Lives, 5 vols. (1683-6) was the second version of the Lives in English—the first being Sir Thomas North's (1579), the chief source of Shakespeare's Roman plays—and the first to be translated from the original Greek. Dryden contributed the dedicatory epistle 'To the Duke of Ormond,' 'The Life of Plutarch' (both marked as his) and, according to Malone's guess, Tonson's address 'To the Reader' as well, all in the first volume. The version itself was provided by some forty translators.

The Life of Plutarch was Dryden's first exercise in literary biography and, apart from his lives of Polybius and Lucian, his only attempt at the form of the biographical-critical study of a single author—a form hardly established for another century, with Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets* (1779-81). He never attempted a 'Life' of an English poet. Much of the Plutarch is frankly derivative, and the manner of the whole suggests rapidly executed hack-work; but Dryden's defence of biography strengthens his claim as a pioneer of historical criticism, and the account of Plutarch's style is original in another sense, 'the first deliberate examination in English of an author's prose style,' as David Nichol Smith has called it (*Dryden*, p. 84). Like the other two classical lives, below, the Plutarch has not been reprinted since *Scott-Saintsbury* (1882-93).

I KNOW not by what fate it comes to pass that historians, who give immortality to others, are so ill requited by posterity that their actions and their fortunes are usually forgotten; neither themselves encouraged while they live, nor their memory preserved entire to future ages. 'Tis the ingratitude of mankind to their greatest benefactors that they who teach us wisdom by the

surest ways (setting before us what we ought to shun or to pursue by the examples of the most famous men whom they record, and by the experience of their faults and virtues) should generally live poor and unregarded; as if they were born only for the public, and had no interest in their own well-being, but were to be lighted up like tapers, and to waste themselves for the benefit of others. But this is a complaint too general, and the custom has been too long established to be remedied; neither does it wholly reach our author. He was born in an age which was sensible of his virtue; and found a Trajan to reward him, as Aristotle did an Alexander. But the historians who succeeded him have either been too envious or too careless of his reputation; none of them, not even his own countrymen, having given us any particular account of him; or if they have, yet their works are not transmitted to us; so that we are forced to glean from Plutarch what he has scattered in his writings concerning himself and his original.

[There follows a biography of Plutarch (*c.* A.D. 50—*c.* 125), the Greek historian and philosopher, which has no claim to originality but 'which I am forced to collect by patches from several authors,' as Dryden admits.]

For like a true philosopher who minded things, not words, he strove not even to cultivate his mother tongue with any great exactness. And himself confesses, in the beginning of Demosthenes his life, that during his abode in Italy and at Rome he had neither the leisure to study, nor so much as to exercise the Roman language (I suppose he means to write in it, rather than to speak it) as well by reason of the affairs he managed, as that he might acquit himself to those who were desirous to be instructed by him in philosophy.[1] In so much that, till the declination of his age, he began not to be conversant in Latin books; in reading of which it happened somewhat oddly to him that he learnt not the knowledge of things by words, but, by the understanding and use he had of things, attained to the knowledge of words which

[1] 'But for my own part I live in a little town, where yet I am willing to continue lest it should grow less; and having no leisure, while I abode in Rome and other parts of Italy, to exercise myself in the Roman language, both by reason of some public business, and for the sake of those who came to be instructed by me in philosophy; it was very late, and in the declination of my age, before I applied myself to the reading of Latin authors' (Dryden's *Plutarch*, V.264).

signified them. Just as Adam (setting aside divine illumination) called the creatures by their proper names, by first understanding of their natures.[1] But for the delicacies of the tongue, the turns of the expression, the figures and connections of words, in which consist the beauty of that language, he plainly tells us that though he much admired them, yet they required too great labour for a man in age and plunged in business to attain perfectly.[2] Which compliment I should be willing to believe from a philosopher, if I did not consider that Dion Cassius, nay even Herodian and Appian after him, as well as Polybius before him, by writing the Roman history in the Greek language, had shewn as manifest a contempt of Latin in respect of the other as Frenchmen now do of English, which they disdain to speak while they live among us; but with great advantage to their trivial conceptions, drawing the discourse into their own language, have learnt to despise our better thoughts, which must come deformed and lame in conversation to them, as being transmitted in a tongue of which we are not masters. This is to arrogate a superiority in nature over us, as undoubtedly the Grecians did over their conquerers by establishing their language for a standard; it being become so much a mode to speak and write Greek in Tully's time that with some indignation I have read his Epistles to Atticus, in which he desires to have his own consulship written by his friend in the Grecian language,[3] which he afterwards performed himself; a vain attempt, in my opinion, for any man to endeavour to excel in a tongue which he was not born to speak. This, tho' it be digression, yet deserves to be considered at more leisure; for the honour of our wit and writings, which are of a more solid make than those of our neighbours, is concerned in it.

[Dryden continues with an account of Plutarch's philosophical interests, and of his probable religious beliefs as a priest of Apollo, especially his belief in spirits or 'daemons,' creatures 'of a middle

[1] Genesis 2.20.

[2] 'But to acquire a graceful and ready pronunciation in the Roman tongue, to understand the various figures and connection of words, and such other ornaments in which consists the beauty of that language, it were, I must confess, a pleasant and very agreeable diversion; but the study and exercise which is required to this is not easy, and will better suit with those who have more leisure and time enough yet before them for such gallantries' (*ibid.*, V.264-5).

[3] Cicero, *Ad Atticum*, II.i.

nature, betwixt divine and human'—a philosophy 'which we have said in the general to be Platonic, though it cannot also be denied that there was a tincture in it of the eclectic sect.' There follows a description of his household affairs, of his later career in Rome, and of the canon of his works.]

It may now be expected that, having written the life of an historian, I should take occasion to write somewhat concerning history itself. But I think to commend it is unnecessary; for the profit and pleasure of that study are both so very obvious that a quick reader will be beforehand with me, and imagine faster than I can write. Besides that the post is taken up already, and few authors have travelled this way but who have strewed it with rhetoric as they passed. For my own part, who must confess it to my shame that I never read any thing but for pleasure, it has always been the most delightful entertainment of my life. But they who have employed the study of it as they ought, for their instruction, for the regulation of their private manners, and the management of public affairs, must agree with me that it is the most pleasant school of wisdom. 'Tis a familiarity with past ages, and an acquaintance with all the heroes of them. 'Tis, if you will pardon the similitude, a prospective-glass carrying your soul to a vast distance, and taking in the farthest objects of antiquity. It informs the understanding by the memory. It helps us to judge of what will happen, by shewing us the like revolutions of former times. For mankind being the same in all ages, agitated by the same passions, and moved to action by the same interests, nothing can come to pass but some precedent of the like nature has already been produced, so that having the causes before our eyes, we cannot easily be deceived in the effects, if we have judgment enough but to draw the parallel.

God, 'tis true, with his divine providence, overrules and guides all actions to the secret end he has ordained them; but in the way of human causes, a wise man may easily discern that there is a natural connection betwixt them; and tho' he cannot foresee accidents, or all things that possibly can come, he may apply examples, and by them foretell that from the like counsels will probably succeed the like events; and thereby, in all concernments, and all offices of life, be instructed in the two main points on which depend our happiness, that is, what to avoid and what to choose. The laws of history in general are truth of

matter, method, and clearness of expression. The first propriety is necessary to keep our understanding from the impositions of falsehood: for history is an argument framed from many particular examples or inductions; if these examples are not true, then those measures of life which we take from them will be false, and deceive us in their consequence. The second is grounded on the former, for if the method be confused, if the words or expressions of thought are any way obscure, then the ideas which we receive must be imperfect; and if such, we are not taught by them what to elect, or what to shun. Truth therefore is required, as the foundation of history, to inform us; disposition and perspicuity, as the manner to inform us plainly. One is the being, the other the well-being of it.

History is principally divided into these three species: *commentaries* or *annals*; *history* properly so called; and *biographia*,[1] or the lives of particular men. Commentaries or annals are (as I may so call them) naked history; or the plain relation of matter of fact, according to the succession of time, divested of all the other ornaments. The springs and motives of actions are not here sought, unless they offer themselves, and are open to every man's discernment. The method is the most natural that can be imagined, depending only on the observation of months and years, and drawing in the order of them whatsoever happened worthy of relation. The style is easy, simple, unforced, and unadorned with the pomp of figures; counsels, guesses, politic observations, sentences, and orations are avoided: in few words, a bare narration is its business. Of this kind the *Commentaries* of Caesar are certainly the most admirable; and after him the *Annals* of Tacitus may have place. Nay, even the prince of Greek historians, Thucydides, may almost be adopted into the number. For tho' he instructs everywhere by sentences, tho' he gives the causes of actions, the counsels of both parties, and makes orations where they are necessary; yet it is certain that he first designed his work a commentary, every year writing down, like an unconcerned spectator as he was, the particular occurrences of the time, in the order as they happened, and his eighth book is wholly written after the way of annals; though, outliving the war, he inserted in his others those ornaments which render his work the most complete and most instructive now extant.

[1] Cf. p. 8n., below.

History, properly so called, may be described by the addition of those parts which are not required to annals: and therefore there is little farther to be said concerning it: only that the dignity and gravity of style is here necessary. That the guesses of secret causes inducing to the actions be drawn at least from the most probable circumstances, not perverted by the malignity of the author to sinister interpretations (of which Tacitus is accused), but candidly laid down, and left to the judgment of the reader. That nothing of concernment be omitted, but things of trivial moment are still to be neglected, as debasing the majesty of the work. That neither partiality or prejudice appear, but that truth may everywhere be sacred (*ne quid falsi dicere audeat, ne quid veri non audeat historicus*).[1] That he neither incline to superstition in giving too much credit to oracles, prophecies, divinations, and prodigies, nor to irreligion, in disclaiming the Almighty Providence. But where general opinion has prevailed of any miraculous accident or portent, he ought to relate it as such, without imposing his opinion on our belief. Next to Thucydides in this kind may be accounted Polybius amongst the Grecians; Livy, tho' not free from superstition, nor Tacitus from ill nature, amongst the Romans; amongst the modern Italians, Guicchiardine[2] and d'Avila,[3] if not partial; but above all men in my opinion, the plain, sincere, unaffected, and most instructive Philip de Commines amongst the French, though he only gives his history the humble name of *Commentaries*.[4] I am sorry I cannot find in our own nation (tho' it has produced some commendable historians) any proper to be ranked with these. Buchanan[5] indeed, for the purity of his Latin and for his learning, and for all other endowments belonging to an historian, might

[1] 'Let the historian not dare say anything false, nor let him not dare to speak the truth'—quotation untraced.

[2] Francesco Guicchiardini (1483-1540), a Florentine politician and historian, and the author of the *Storia d'Italia*.

[3] González de Avila (1578-1658) was in fact a Spanish historian.

[4] Philippe de Comines (1447?-1511), a French political historian whose *Mémoires* (1524) cover the years 1464-98. It had already been translated several times into English, but was unknown as 'Commentaries' in either language.

[5] George Buchanan (1506-82), Scottish humanist and poet, tutor to King James VI and I. His *Rerum scoticarum historia* (1582) is highly anti-Catholic and anti-Marian, a bias Dryden was bound not to admire. Johnson shared Dryden's admiration for Buchanan's Latin, calling him 'a great poetical genius' and 'the only man of genius his country ever produced' (Boswell's *Life*, 20 October 1769 and 1783).

be placed amongst the greatest, if he had not too much leaned to prejudice, and too manifestly declared himself a party of a cause rather than an historian of it. Excepting only that (which I desire not to urge too far on so great a man, but only to give caution to his readers concerning it), our isle may justly boast in him a writer comparable to any of the moderns, and excelled by few of the ancients.

Biographia, or the history of particular men's lives, comes next to be considered; which in dignity is inferior to the other two, as being more confined in action, and treating of wars and counsels, and all other public affairs of nations, only as they relate to him whose life is written, or as his fortunes have a particular dependence on them, or connection to them. All things here are circumscribed and driven to a point, so as to terminate in one. Consequently, if the action or counsel were managed by colleagues, some part of it must be either lame or wanting, except it be supplied by the excursion of the writer. Herein likewise must be less of variety for the same reason, because the fortunes and actions of one man are related, not those of many. Thus the actions and achievements of Sulla, Lucullus, and Pompey are all of them but the successive parts of the Mithridatic War, of which we could have no perfect image if the same hand had not given us the whole, tho' at several views, in their particular lives.

Yet, tho' we allow for the reasons above alleged that this kind of writing is in dignity inferior to history and annals, in pleasure and instruction it equals or even excels both of them. 'Tis not only commended by ancient practice to celebrate the memory of great and worthy men, as the best thanks which posterity can pay them; but also the examples of virtue are of more vigour when they are thus contracted into individuals. As the sunbeams, united in a burning-glass to a point, have greater force than when they are darted from a plain superficies, so the virtues and actions of one man, drawn together into a single story, strike upon our minds a stronger and more lively impression than the scattered relations of many men and many actions; and by the same means that they give us pleasure, they afford us profit too. For when the understanding is intent and fixed on a single thing, it carries closer to the mark, every part of the object sinks into it, and the soul receives it unmixed and whole.

For this reason Aristotle commends the unity of action in a poem,[1] because the mind is not capable of digesting many things at once, nor of conceiving fully any more than one idea at a time. Whatsoever distracts the pleasure, lessens it. And as the reader is more concerned at one man's fortune than those of many; so likewise the writer is more capable of making a perfect work if he confine himself to this narrow compass. The lineaments, features, and colourings of a single picture may be hit exactly; but in a history-piece of many figures, the general design, the ordinance or disposition of it, the relation of one figure to another, the diversity of the posture, habits, shadowings, and all the other graces conspiring to an uniformity, are of so difficult performance that neither is the resemblance of particular persons often perfect, nor the beauty of the piece complete; for any considerable error in the parts renders the whole disagreeable and lame. Thus then the perfection of the work and the benefit arising from it are both more absolute in biography[2] than in history: all history is only the precepts of moral philosophy reduced into examples: moral philosophy is divided into two parts, ethics and politics; the first instructs us in our private offices of virtue, the second in those which relate to the management of the commonwealth. Both of these teach by argumentation and reasoning, which rush as it were into the mind, and possess it with violence. But history rather allures than forces us to virtue. There is nothing of the tyrant in example; but it gently slides into us, is easy and pleasant in its passage, and in one word reduces into practice our speculative notions. Therefore, the more powerful the examples are, they are the more useful also, and by being more known they are more powerful. Now unity, which is defined, is in its own nature more apt to be understood than multiplicity, which in some measure participates of infinity. The reason is Aristotle's.[3]

Biographia, or the histories of particular lives, tho' circumscribed in the subject, is yet more extensive in the style than the other two. For it not only comprehends them both, but has somewhat superadded which neither of them have. The style of

[1] *Poetics*, ch. viii.

[2] The earliest recorded use of the word in English, though Fuller had used 'biographist' in 1662 (*Worthies*, iii)—hence Dryden's hesitation, marked by his use of the Latin form *biographia*, above.

[3] *Poetics*, ch. viii.

it is various, according to the occasion. There are proper places in it for the plainness and nakedness of narration which is ascribed to annals; there is also room reserved for the loftiness and gravity of general history, when the actions related shall require that manner of expression. But there is withal a descent into minute circumstances and trivial passages of life which are natural to this way of writing, and which the dignity of the other two will not admit. There you are conducted only into the rooms of state; here you are led into the private lodgings of the hero; you see him in his undress, and are made familiar with his most private actions and conversations. You may behold a Scipio and a Lelius gathering cockleshells on the shore, Augustus playing at bounding-stones with boys, and Agesilaus riding on a hobby-horse among his children. The pageantry of life is taken away; you see the poor reasonable animal, as naked as nature ever made him; are made acquainted with his passions and his follies, and find the demi-god a man.

[Dryden then praises Plutarch as a biographer in the light of these principles, and asserts his superiority over other Greek and Roman biographers.]

Then he was more happy in his digressions than any we have named. I have always been pleased to see him, and his imitator Montaigne, when they strike a little out of the common road, for we are sure to be the better for their wandering. The best quarry lies not always in the open field; and who would not be content to follow a good huntsman over hedges and ditches when he knows the game will reward his pains? But if we mark him more narrowly, we may observe that the great reason of his frequent starts is the variety of his learning: he knew so much of nature, was so vastly furnished with all the treasures of the mind, that he was uneasy to himself and was forced, as I may say, to lay down some at every passage, and to scatter his riches as he went. Like another Alexander or Adrian, he built a city or planted a colony in every part of his progress, and left behind him some memorial of his greatness. Sparta, and Thebes, and Athens, and Rome, the mistress of the world, he has discovered in their foundations, their institutions, their growth, their height, the decay of the three first and the alteration of the last. You see those several people in their several laws, and policies,

and forms of government, in their warriors, and senators, and demagogues. Nor are the ornaments of poetry and the illustrations of similitudes forgotten by him, in both which he instructs as well as pleases: or rather pleases that he may instruct.

This last reflection leads me naturally to say somewhat in general of his style, tho' after having justly praised him for copiousness of learning, integrity, perspicuity, and more than all this for a certain air of goodness which appears through all his writings, it were unreasonable to be critical on his elocution. As on a tree which bears excellent fruit, we consider not the beauty of the blossoms, for if they are not pleasant to the eye, or delightful to the scent, we know at the same time that they are not the prime intention of nature, but are thrust out in order to their product; so in Plutarch, whose business was not to please the ear but to charm and to instruct the mind, we may easily forgive the cadences of words and the roughness of expression. Yet for manliness of eloquence, if it abounded not in our author, it was not wanting in him: he neither studied the sublime style, nor affected the flowery. The choice of words, the numbers of periods, the turns of sentences, and those other ornaments of speech, he neither sought nor shunned. But the depth of sense, the accuracy of judgment, the disposition of the parts and contexture of the whole in so admirable and vast a field of matter, and lastly the copiousness and variety of words, appear shining in our author. 'Tis indeed observed of him that he keeps not always to the style of prose, but if a poetical word which carries in it more of emphasis or signification offer itself at any time, he refuses it not because Homer or Euripides have used it. But if this be a fault, I know not how Xenophon will stand excused. Yet neither do I compare our author with him or with Herodotus in the sweetness and graces of his style, nor with Thucydides in the solidity and closeness of expression. For Herodotus is acknowledged the prince of the Ionic, the other two of the Attic eloquence. As for Plutarch, his style is so particular that there is none of the Ancients to whom we can properly resemble him. And the reason of this is obvious; for being conversant in so great a variety of authors, and collecting from all of them what he thought most excellent, out of the confusion or rather mixture of all their styles he formed his own, which partaking of each was yet none of them, but a compound of them all, like the

Corinthian metal, which had in it gold, and brass, and silver, and yet was a species by its self. Add to this that in Plutarch's time, and long before it, the purity of the Greek tongue was corrupted, and the native splendour of it had taken the tarnish of barbarism, and contracted the filth and spots of degenerating ages. For the fall of empires always draws after it the language and eloquence of the people. They who labour under misfortunes or servitude have little leisure to cultivate their mother-tongue. To conclude, when Athens had lost her sovereignty to the Peloponnesians, and her liberty to Philip, neither a Thucydides nor a Demosthenes were afterwards produced by her.

I have formerly acknowledged many lapses of our author occasioned through his inadvertency, but he is likewise taxed with faults which reflect on his judgment in matters of fact, and his candour in the comparisons of his Greeks and Romans. Both which are so well vindicated by Montaigne that I need but barely to translate him.

[There follows a seven-page quotation in English from the *Essais*, II, xxxii ('Défense de Sénèque et de Plutarque'), in defence of Plutarch's impartiality, and a further quotation from St Evremond's essay 'A Judgment upon Seneca, Plutarch, and Petronius,' concluding with an emphatic judgment in Plutarch's favour.]

It seems to me, I must confess, that our author has not been more hardly treated by his enemies, in his comparing other men, than he has been by his friends in their comparing Seneca with him. And herein even Montaigne himself is scarcely to be defended. For no man more esteemed Plutarch, no man was better acquainted with his excellences, yet this notwithstanding he has done too great an honour to Seneca by ranking him with our philosopher and historian, him, I say, who was so much less a philosopher, and no historian. 'Tis a reputation to Seneca that anyone has offered at the comparison: the worth of his adversary makes his defeat advantageous to him; and Plutarch might cry out with justice: *qui cum victus erit, mecum certasse feretur.*[1] If I had been to find out a parallel for Plutarch, I should rather have pitched on Varro, the most learned of the Romans, if at last his works had yet remained; or with Pomponius Atticus, if he had written. But the likeness of Seneca is so little that, except the

[1] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, xiii.20: 'When he is defeated, he will be famous for having matched himself with me.'

one's being tutor to Nero, and the other to Trajan, both of them strangers to Rome yet raised to the highest dignities in that city, and both philosophers tho' of several sects (for Seneca was a Stoic, Plutarch a Platonician, at least an Academic, that is, half Platonist half Sceptic); besides some such faint resemblances as these, Seneca and Plutarch seem to have as little relation to one another as their native countries, Spain and Greece. If we consider them in their inclinations or humours, Plutarch was sociable and pleasant, Seneca morose and melancholy; Plutarch a lover of conversation and sober feasts, Seneca reserved, uneasy to himself when alone, to others when in company. Compare them in their manners: Plutarch everywhere appears candid, Seneca often is censorious. Plutarch, out of his natural humanity, is frequent in commending what he can; Seneca, out of the sourness of his temper, is prone to satire, and still searching for some occasion to vent his gall. Plutarch is pleased with an opportunity of praising virtue; and Seneca (to speak the best of him) is glad of a pretence to reprehend vice. Plutarch endeavours to teach others, but refuses not to be taught himself, for he is always doubtful and inquisitive: Seneca is altogether for teaching others, but so teaches them that he imposes his opinions; for he was of a sect too imperious and dogmatical either to be taught or contradicted. And yet Plutarch writes like a man of a confirmed probity, Seneca like one of a weak and staggering virtue. Plutarch seems to have vanquished vice, and to have triumphed over it: Seneca seems only to be combating and resisting, and that too but in his own defence. Therefore Plutarch is easy in his discourse, as one who has overcome the difficulty: Seneca is painful, as he who still labours under it. Plutarch's virtue is humbled and civilized: Seneca's haughty and ill-bred. Plutarch allures you, Seneca commands you. One would make virtue your companion, the other your tyrant. The style of Plutarch is easy and flowing, that of Seneca precipitous and harsh. The first is even, the second broken. The arguments of the Grecian, drawn from reason, work themselves into your understanding, and make a deep and lasting impression in your mind: those of the Roman, drawn from wit, flash immediately on your imagination, but leave no durable effect. So this tickles you by starts with his arguteness,[1] that pleases you for continuance with his

[1] I.e. shrewdness, sharpness.

propriety. The course of their fortunes seems also to have partaken of their styles; for Plutarch's was equal, smooth, and and of the same tenor: Seneca's was turbid, unconstant and full of revolutions.

[The Life concludes in praise of Plutarch's private virtues, with the testimonies of other commentators in his favour.]

TO THE EARL OF ROSCOMMON, ON HIS EXCELLENT *ESSAY ON TRANSLATED VERSE*

Prefixed to Roscommon, *An Essay on Translated Verse* (1684)

PROGRESS OF POETRY SINCE THE GREEKS—
ROSCOMMON'S POEM

Text: 4°, 1685 (the second and revised edition).

Wentworth Dillon (1633?-85), fourth Earl of Roscommon, was born in Ireland, a fact much exploited in Dryden's complimentary verses. A Royalist, he spent some years on the Continent before the Restoration, when he returned to a place of favour at Charles II's Court. He wrote a number of poems, mostly published after his death, as well as translating Horace's *Ars poetica* (1680), and Ovid's *Ars amatoria* (1692); and according to Elijah Fenton, in his edition of Waller's *Works* (1744), p. cxl, 'he began to form a Society for the refining and fixing the standard of our language; in which design his great friend Mr Dryden was a principal assistant.' Nothing more seems known of this society, though its design figures repeatedly in Dryden's criticism (cf. the dedication to *Troilus and Cressida*, vol. I, pp. 239f., above).

Dryden's complimentary verses are remarkable for their rejection of rhyme (ll. 21-3)—a total contradiction of Neander's position in the essay *Of Dramatic Poesy*, and much more categorical than anything in the preface to *All for Love*.

Whether the fruitful Nile, or Tyrian shore
The seeds of arts and infant science bore,
'Tis sure the noble plant, translated first,
Advanced its head in Grecian gardens nursed.
The Grecians added verse; their tuneful tongue
Made nature first, and nature's God their song.
Nor stopped translation here: for conquering Rome
With Grecians' spoils brought Grecian numbers home;
Enrich'd by those Athenian Muses more

Than all the vanquish'd world could yield before.
Till barb'rous nations, and more barb'rous times
Debased the majesty of verse to rhymes;
Those rude at first: a kind of hobbling prose
That limp'd along, and tinkl'd in the close.
But Italy, reviving from the trance
Of Vandal, Goth, and monkish ignorance,
With pauses, cadence, and well vowell'd words,
And all the graces a good ear affords,
Made rhyme an art: and Dante's polish'd page
Restor'd a silver, not a golden age.
Then Petrarch follow'd, and in him we see
What rhyme improv'd in all its height can be:
At best a pleasing sound, and fair barbarity.[1]
The French pursu'd their steps; and Britain, last
In manly sweetness all the rest surpass'd.
The wit of Greece, the gravity of Rome
Appear exalted in the British loom;
The Muses' empire is restored again
In Charles his reign, and by Roscommon's pen.
Yet modestly he does his work survey,
And calls his finish'd poem an *Essay*.
For all the needful rules are scattered here;
Truth smoothly told, and pleasantly severe
(So well is art disguis'd, for nature to appear).
Nor need those rules to give translation light;
His own example[2] is a flame so bright
That he who but arrives to copy well
Unguided will advance, unknowing will excel.

[1] This dismissal of rhyme is all the stranger in a rhyming compliment to Roscommon's rhyming *Essay*, where the paradox, however, can be paralleled:

Of many faults rhyme is (perhaps) the cause;
Too strict to rhyme, we slight more useful laws.
For that, in Greece and Rome, was never known,
Till by barbarian deluges o'erflown. . . .
But now that Phoebus and the sacred Nine
With all their beams on one blest island shine,
Why should not we the ancient rites restore,
And be what Rome and Athens were before?

[2] Roscommon's first published translation, *Horace's Art of Poetry Made English*, had appeared in 1680, followed by a version of Virgil's sixth Eclogue in *Miscellany Poems* (1684).

Scarce his own Horace could such rules ordain,
Or his own Virgil sing a nobler strain.
How much in him may rising Ireland boast,
How much in gaining him has Britain lost!
Their island in revenge has ours reclaimed,
The more instructed we, the more we still are sham'd.
'Tis well for us his generous blood did flow,
Derived from British channels long ago;
That here his conquering ancestors were[1] nursed;
And Ireland but translated England first.
By this reprisal we regain our right,
Else must the two contending nations fight;
A nobler quarrel for his native earth
Than what divided Greece for Homer's birth.
To what perfection will our tongue arrive,
How will invention and translation thrive,
When authors nobly born will bear their part
And not disdain th' inglorious praise of art!
Great generals thus descending from command,
With their own toil provoke the solders' hand.
How will sweet Ovid's[2] ghost be pleased to hear
His fame augmented by an English[3] peer,
How he embellishes his Helen's loves,
Outdoes his softness, and his sense improves?
When these translate, and teach translators too,
Nor firstling kid, nor any vulgar vow
Should at Apollo's grateful altar stand;
Roscommon writes, to that auspicious hand,
Muse feed the bull that spurns the yellow sand.
Roscommon, whom both court and camps commend,
True to his Prince, and faithful to his friend;
Roscommon first in fields of honour known,
First in the peaceful triumphs of the gown,
Who[4] both Minervas[5] justly makes his own.
Now let the few belov'd by Jove, and they

[1] 'was,' *1684*.

[2] Mulgrave and Dryden had collaborated in a version of 'Helen to Paris' in *Ovid's Epistles Translated* (1680).

[3] 'British,' *1684*. [4] 'he,' *1684*.

[5] Minerva (Pallas Athene) was the goddess both of war and of the arts.

Whom infus'd Titan[1] form'd of better clay,
On equal terms with ancient wit engage,
Nor mighty Homer fear, nor sacred Virgil's page:
Our English palace open wide in state;
And without stooping they may pass the gate.

[1] Juvenal, *Satires*, xiv, 35 (of the Titan Prometheus, who created man out of clay).

PREFACE

to *Sylvæ: or the Second Part of Poetical Miscellanies* (1685)

ART OF TRANSLATION—VIRGIL, LUCRETIUS, THEOCRITUS, HORACE

Text: 8°, 1685.

Tonson's second miscellany contains a number of Dryden's poems—nearly all translations from the Greek and Latin—published for the first time: three passages of Virgil (rewritten for the complete Virgil of 1697); five passages from the *De rerum natura* of Lucretius; three idylls of Theocritus (nos. 18, 23, and 27); three odes and one epode of Horace; and two songs. The volume probably appeared at the end of 1684, and represents his work during the second half of that year.

The preface freely confesses Dryden's haste over his translations from four poets, and shows signs of haste in its own composition. It continues, in the loose-reined style Dryden acquired in the course of the 1680's, his account of the art of verse-translation begun in the preface to *Ovid's Epistles* (vol. I, pp. 262-73, above); and enlarges on the plea he had made five years before for a more liberal tradition in translating poetry, insisting upon a sympathetic understanding of the distinguishing character of the poet's work.

FOR this last half year I have been troubled with the disease (as I may call it) of translation; the cold prose fits of it (which are always the most tedious with me), were spent in the *History of the League*;[1] the hot (which succeeded them), in this volume of verse miscellanies. The truth is, I fancied to myself a kind of ease in the change of the paroxysm; never suspecting but that the humour would have wasted itself in two or three pastorals of Theocritus, and as many odes of Horace. But finding, or at least thinking I found, something that was more pleasing in them than my ordinary productions, I encouraged myself to renew my old acquaintance with Lucretius and Virgil; and

[1] Dryden's translation of Maimbourg's *Histoire de la Ligue*, reluctantly undertaken at the King's command, had appeared in July 1684.

immediately fixed upon some parts of them which had most affected me in the reading. These were my natural impulses for the undertaking. But there was an accidental motive which was full as forcible, and God forgive him who was the occasion of it. It was my Lord Roscommon's *Essay* on translated verse,[1] which[2] made me uneasy till I tried whether or no I was capable of following his rules, and of reducing the speculation into practice. For many a fair precept in poetry is like a seeming demonstration in the mathematics: very specious in the diagram, but failing in the mechanic operation. I think I have generally observed his instructions; I am sure my reason is sufficiently convinced both of their truth and usefulness; which, in other words, is to confess no less a vanity than to pretend that I have at least in some places made examples to his rules. Yet withal, I must acknowledge that I have many times exceeded my commission; for I have both added and omitted, and even sometimes very boldly made such expositions of my authors, as no Dutch commentator will forgive me. Perhaps, in such particular passages, I have thought that I discovered some beauty yet undiscovered by those pedants, which none but a poet could have found. Where I have taken away some of their expressions, and cut them shorter, it may possibly be on this consideration, that what was beautiful in the Greek or Latin would not appear so shining in the English: and where I have enlarged them, I desire the false critics would always think that those thoughts are wholly mine, but that either they are secretly in the poet, or may be fairly deduced from him; or at least, if both those considerations should fail, that my own is of a piece with his, and that if he were living, and an Englishman, they are such as he would probably have written.

For, after all, a translator is to make his author appear as charming as possibly he can, provided he maintains his character, and makes him not unlike himself. Translation is a kind of drawing after the life; where every one will acknowledge there is a double sort of likeness, a good one and a bad. 'Tis one thing to draw the outlines true, the features like, the proportions exact, the colouring itself perhaps tolerable; and another thing to make

[1] Cf. Dryden's complimentary verses to Roscommon's verse *Essay* (1684), pp. 14-17, above.
[2] 'whose,' *1685*.

all these graceful, by the posture, the shadowings, and chiefly by the spirit which animates the whole. I cannot without some indignation look on an ill copy of an excellent original: much less can I behold with patience Virgil, Homer, and some others, whose beauties I have been endeavouring all my life to imitate, so abused, as I may say to their faces, by a botching interpreter. What English readers, unacquainted with Greek or Latin, will believe me, or any other man, when we commend those authors, and confess we derive all that is pardonable in us from their fountains, if they take those to the same poets whom our Oglebys[1] have translated? But I dare assure them that a good poet is no more like himself in a dull translation, than his carcass would be to his living body. There are many who understand Greek and Latin, and yet are ignorant of their mother-tongue. The properties and delicacies of the English are known to few; 'tis impossible even for a good wit to understand and practise them, without the help of a liberal education, long reading, and digesting of those few good authors we have amongst us, the knowledge of men and manners, the freedom of habitudes and conversation with the best company of both sexes; and, in short, without wearing off the rust which he contracted while he was laying in a stock of learning. Thus difficult it is to understand the purity of English, and critically to discern not only good writers from bad, and a proper style from a corrupt, but also to distinguish that which is pure in a good author from that which is vicious and corrupt in him. And for want of all these requisites, or the greatest part of them, most of our ingenious young men take up some cried-up English poet for their model, adore him, and imitate him as they think, without knowing wherein he is defective, where he is boyish and trifling, wherein either his thoughts are improper to his subject, or his expressions unworthy of his thoughts, or the turn of both is unharmonious. Thus it appears necessary that a man should be a nice critic in his mother-tongue before he attempts to translate a foreign language. Neither is it sufficient that he be able to judge of words and style; but he must be a master of them too; he must perfectly understand his author's tongue, and absolutely command his own. So that to be a thorough translator, he must be a thorough poet. Neither

[1] John Ogilby (1600-76) had translated both Virgil (1649) and Homer (1660-5).

is it enough to give his author's sense in good English, in poetical expressions, and in musical numbers. For, though all these are exceeding difficult to perform, there yet remains an harder task; and 'tis a secret of which few translators have sufficiently thought. I have already hinted a word or two concerning it; that is, the maintaining the character of an author, which distinguishes him from all others, and makes him appear that individual poet whom you would interpret. For example, not only the thoughts, but the style and versification[1] of Virgil and Ovid, are very different. Yet I see, even in our best poets who have translated some parts of them, that they have confounded their several talents; and by endeavouring only at the sweetness and harmony of numbers, have made them both so much alike that, if I did not know the originals, I should never be able to judge by the copies which was Virgil, and which was Ovid. It was objected against a late noble painter[2] that he drew many graceful pictures, but few of them were like. And this happened to him, because he always studied himself more than those who sat to him. In such translators I can easily distinguish the hand which performed the work, but I cannot distinguish their poet from another. Suppose two authors are equally sweet, yet there is a great distinction to be made in sweetness, as in that of sugar and that of honey. I can make the difference more plain, by giving you (if it be worth knowing) my own method of proceeding, in my translations out of four several poets in this volume: Virgil, Theocritus, Lucretius, and Horace. In each of these, before I undertook them, I considered the genius and distinguishing character of my author. I looked on Virgil as a succinct and grave majestic writer; one who weighed not only every thought, but every word and syllable; who was still aiming to crowd his sense into as narrow a compass as possibly he could; for which reason he is so very figurative, that he requires (I may almost say) a grammar apart to construe him. His verse is everywhere sounding the very thing in your ears whose sense it bears; yet the numbers are perpetually varied, to increase the delight of the reader; so that the same sounds are never repeated twice together. On the contrary, Ovid and Claudian, though they write in styles differing

[1] The first recorded use of the word in the sense of 'metre.'

[2] Almost certainly the Dutch painter Sir Peter Lely (1618-80), against whose portraits of languorous court beauties this charge has always been common.

from each other, yet have each of them but one sort of music in their verses. All the versification and little variety of Claudian is included within the compass of four or five lines, and then he begins again the same tenor; perpetually closing his sense at the end of a verse, and that verse commonly which they call golden,[1] or two substantives and two adjectives with a verb betwixt them to keep the peace. Ovid, with all his sweetness, has as little variety of numbers and sound as he: he is always, as it were, upon the hand-gallop,[2] and his verse runs upon carpet ground. He avoids like the other all synalæphas, or cutting off one vowel when it comes before another in the following word; so that, minding only smoothness, he wants both variety and majesty.

But to return to Virgil: though he is smooth where smoothness is required, yet he is so far from affecting it that he seems rather to disdain it; frequently makes use of synalæphas, and concludes his sense in the middle of his verse. He is everywhere above conceits of epigrammatic wit, and gross hyperboles; he maintains majesty in the midst of plainness; he shines, but glares not; and is stately without ambition, which is the vice of Lucan. I drew my definition of poetical wit from my particular consideration of him: for propriety of thoughts and words are only to be found in him; and where they are proper they will be delightful. Pleasure follows of necessity, as the effect does the cause; and therefore is not to be put into the definition. This exact propriety of Virgil I particularly regarded as a great part of his character; but must confess, to my shame, that I have not been able to translate any part of him so well as to make him appear wholly like himself. For where the original is close, no version can reach it in the same compass. Hannibal Caro's,[3] in the Italian, is the nearest, the most poetical, and the most sonorous of any translation of the Æneids; yet, though he takes the advantage of blank verse, he commonly allows two lines for one of Virgil, and does not always hit his sense. Tasso tells us, in his letters, that Sperone Speroni, a great Italian wit, who was his contemporary, observed of Virgil and Tully that the Latin orator endeavoured to imitate the copiousness of Homer, the Greek poet; and that

[1] Evidentally a term from the jargon of Restoration poets, otherwise unrecorded. [2] I.e. at an easy gallop.

[3] The Italian version by Caro (1507-66) had appeared in 1581. Dryden later came to think less well of it, as he makes clear in his prefaces to the Juvenal (1693) and the Virgil (1697). Cf. pp. 84-5, 240, below.

the Latin poet made it his business to reach the conciseness of Demosthenes, the Greek orator.[1] Virgil, therefore, being so very sparing of his words, and leaving so much to be imagined by the reader, can never be translated as he ought in any modern tongue. To make him copious is to alter his character; and to translate him line for line is impossible; because the Latin is naturally a more succinct language than either the Italian, Spanish, French, or even than the English (which by reason of its monosyllables is far the most compendious of them). Virgil is much the closest of any Roman poet, and the Latin hexameter has more feet than the English heroic.

Besides all this, an author has the choice of his own thoughts and words, which a translator has not; he is confined by the sense of the inventor to those expressions which are the nearest to it: so that Virgil, studying brevity, and having the command of his own language, could bring those words into a narrow compass which a translator cannot render without circumlocutions. In short, they who have called him the torture of grammarians might also have called him the plague of translators; for he seems to have studied not to be translated. I own that, endeavouring to turn his *Nisus and Euryalus*[2] as close as I was able, I have performed that episode too literally; that, giving more scope to *Mezentius and Lausus*,[3] that version, which has more of the majesty of Virgil, has less of his conciseness; and all that I can promise for myself is only that I have done both better than Ogleby, and perhaps as well as Caro. So that methinks I come like a malefactor, to make a speech upon the gallows, and to warn all other poets, by my sad example, from the sacrilege of translating Virgil. Yet, by considering him so carefully as I did before my attempt, I have made some faint resemblance of him; and had I taken more time, might possibly have succeeded better; but never so well as to have satisfied myself.

He who excels all other poets in his own language, were it possible to do him right, must appear above them in our tongue, which, as my Lord Roscommon justly observes, approaches nearest to the Roman in its majesty;[4] nearest indeed, but with

[1] Tasso, *Discorsi del poema eroica*, bk II. [2] *Aeneid*, ix.176f. [3] *Ibid.*, x.426f.

[4] When in triumphant state the British Muse
True to herself, shall barb'rous aid refuse,
And in the Roman majesty appear,
Which none know better, and none come so near.

a vast interval betwixt them. There is inimitable grace in Virgil's words, and in them principally consists that beauty which gives so unexpressible a pleasure to him who best understands their force. This diction of his, I must once again say, is never to be copied; and since it cannot, he will appear but lame in the best translation. The turns of his verse, his breakings,[1] his propriety, his numbers, and his gravity, I have as far imitated as the poverty of our language, and the hastiness of my performance, would allow. I may seem sometimes to have varied from his sense; but I think the greatest variations may be fairly deduced from him; and where I leave his commentators, it may be I understand him better: at least I writ without consulting them in many places. But two particular lines in *Mezentius and Lausus* I cannot sc easily excuse. They are indeed remotely allied to Virgil's sense; by they are too like the trifling tenderness of Ovid, and were printed before I had considered them enough to alter tham. The first of them I have forgotten, and cannot easily retrieve, because the copy is at the press. The second is this:

When Lausus died, I was already slain.[2]

This appears pretty enough at first sight; but I am convinced, for many reasons, that the expression is too bold; that Virgil would not have said it, though Ovid would. The reader may pardon it, if he please, for the freeness of the confession; and instead of that, and the former, admit these two lines, which are more according to the author:

Nor ask I life, nor fought with that design;
As I had used my fortune, use thou thine.[3]

Having with much ado got clear of Virgil, I have, in the next place, to consider the genius of Lucretius, whom I have translated more happily in those parts of him which I undertook. If he was not of the best age of Roman poetry, he was at least of that which preceded it; and he himself refined it to that degree of

[1] Evidently Dryden's term for 'caesura,' which he uses everywhere to mean 'elision.'

[2] In the 1697 Virgil, Dryden omitted this line, and the preceding one, from his earlier attempt in the *Sylvæ*:

But, with a glorious Fate, to end my pain;
When Lausus fell, I was already slain.

[3] The lines later inserted in the 1697 *Aeneis*, x.1299-1300.

perfection, both in the language and the thoughts, that he left an easy task to Virgil; who, as he succeeded him in time, so he copied his excellencies; for the method of the Georgics is plainly derived from him. Lucretius had chosen a subject naturally crabbed; he therefore adorned it with poetical descriptions, and precepts of morality, in the beginning and ending of his books; which you see Virgil has imitated with great success, in those four books which, in my opinion, are more perfect in their kind than even his divine Æneids. The turn of his verse he has likewise followed in those places which Lucretius has most laboured, and some of his very lines he has transplanted into his own works, without much variation.

If I am not mistaken, the distinguishing character of Lucretius (I mean of his soul and genius) is a certain kind of noble pride, and positive assertion of his opinions. He is everywhere confident of his own reason, and assuming an absolute command, not only over his vulgar reader, but even his patron Memmius. For he is always bidding him attend, as if he had the rod over him; and using a magisterial authority while he instructs him. From his time to ours, I know none so like him, as our poet and philosopher of Malmesbury.[1] This is that perpetual dictatorship which is exercised by Lucretius; who, though often in the wrong, yet seems to deal *bona fide* with his reader, and tells him nothing but what he thinks; in which plain sincerity, I believe, he differs from our Hobbes, who could not but be convinced, or at least doubt, of some eternal truths which he had opposed. But for Lucretius, he seems to disdain all manner of replies, and is so confident of his cause that he is beforehand with his antagonists; urging for them whatever he imagined they could say, and leaving them, as he supposes, without an objection for the future. All this, too, with so much scorn and indignation, as if he were assured of the triumph, before he entered into the lists. From this sublime and daring genius of his, it must of necessity come to pass that his thoughts must be masculine, full of argumentation, and that sufficiently warm. From the same fiery temper proceeds the loftiness of his expressions, and the perpetual torrent of his verse, where the barrenness of his subject does not too much constrain the quickness of his fancy. For there is no doubt to be

[1] The reputation of Hobbes, who had died in 1679, was still deeply suspect in orthodox and Royalist circles.

made but that he could have been everywhere as poetical as he is in his descriptions, and in the moral part of his philosophy, if he had not aimed more to instruct in his System of Nature than to delight. But he was bent upon making Memmius a materialist, and teaching him to defy an invisible power. In short, he was so much an atheist that he forgot sometimes to be a poet. These are the considerations which I had of that author, before I attempted to translate some parts of him. And accordingly I laid by my natural diffidence and scepticism for a while, to take up that dogmatical way of his, which, as I said, is so much his character as to make him that individual poet. As for his opinions concerning the mortality of the soul, they are so absurd that I cannot, if I would, believe them. I think a future state demonstrable even by natural arguments; at least, to take away rewards and punishments, is only a pleasing prospect to a man who resolves beforehand not to live morally. But on the other side, the thought of being nothing after death is a burden unsupportable to a virtuous man, even though a heathen. We naturally aim at happiness, and cannot bear to have it confined to the shortness of our present being, especially when we consider that virtue is generally unhappy in this world, and vice fortunate. So that 'tis hope of futurity alone that makes this life tolerable, in expectation of a better. Who would not commit all the excesses to which he is prompted by his natural inclinations, if he may do them with security while he is alive, and be uncapable of punishment after he is dead! If he be cunning and secret enough to avoid the laws, there is no band of morality to restrain him. For fame and reputation are weak ties; many men have not the least sense of them; powerful men are only awed by them, as they conduce to their interest, and that not always, when a passion is predominant; and no man will be contained within the bounds of duty, when he may safely transgress them. These are my thoughts abstractedly, and without entering into the notions of our Christian faith, which is the proper business of divines.

But there are other arguments in this poem (which I have turned into English) not belonging to the mortality of the soul, which are strong enough to a reasonable man, to make him less in love with life, and consequently in less apprehensions of death. Such as are the natural satiety proceeding from a

perpetual enjoyment of the same things; the inconveniences of old age, which make him incapable of corporeal pleasures; the decay of understanding and memory, which render him contemptible, and useless to others; these, and many other reasons, so pathetically urged, so beautifully expressed, so adorned with examples, and so admirably raised by the *prosopopœia*[1] of Nature, who is brought in speaking to her children with so much authority and vigour, deserve the pains I have taken with them, which I hope have not been unsuccessful, or unworthy of my author. At least I must take the liberty to own that I was pleased with my own endeavours, which but rarely happens to me; and that I am not dissatisfied upon the review of anything I have done in this author.

'Tis true, there is something, and that of some moment, to be objected against my englishing the *Nature of Love*, from the fourth book of Lucretius; and I can less easily answer why I translated it, than why I thus translated it. The objection arises from the obscenity of the subject; which is aggravated by the too lively and alluring delicacy of the verses. In the first place, without the least formality of an excuse, I own it pleased me: and let my enemies make the worst they can of this confession. I am not yet so secure from that passion, but that I want my author's antidotes against it. He has given the truest and most philosophical account, both of the disease and remedy, which I ever found in any author; for which reasons I translated him. But it will be asked why I turned him into this luscious English (for I will not give it a worse word). Instead of an answer, I would ask again of my supercilious adversaries whether I am not bound, when I translate an author, to do him all the right I can, and to translate him to the best advantage. If, to mince his meaning, which I am satisfied was honest and instructive, I had either omitted some part of which he said, or taken from the strength of his expression, I certainly had wronged him; and that freeness of thought and words being thus cashiered in my hands, he had no longer been Lucretius. If nothing of this kind be to be read, physicians must not study nature, anatomies must not be seen, and somewhat I could say of particular passages in books which, to avoid profaneness, I do not name. But the intention qualifies the act; and both mine and my author's were

[1] I.e. personification.

to instruct as well as please. 'Tis most certain that barefaced bawdry is the poorest pretence to wit imaginable. If I should say otherwise, I should have two great authorities against me: the one is the *Essay on Poetry*,[1] which I publicly valued before I knew the author of it, and with the commendation of which my Lord Roscommon so happily begins his *Essay on Translated Verse*.[2] The other is no less than our admired Cowley, who says the same thing in other words; for, in his 'Ode concerning Wit', he writes thus of it:

Much less can that have any place,
At which a virgin hides her face;
Such dross the fire must purge away; 'tis just
The author blush, there where the reader must.[3]

Here indeed Mr Cowley goes farther than the *Essay*: for he asserts plainly that obscenity has no place in wit; the other only says, 'tis a poor pretence to it, or an ill sort of wit, which has nothing more to support it than barefaced ribaldry; which is both unmannerly in itself, and fulsome to the reader. But neither of these will reach my case. For, in the first place, I am only the translator, not the inventor; so that the heaviest part of the censure falls upon Lucretius, before it reaches me: in the next place, neither he nor I have used the grossest words, but the cleanliest metaphors we could find, to palliate the broadness of the meaning; and to conclude, have carried the poetical part no farther than the philosophical exacted.

There is one mistake of mine which I will not lay to the printer's charge, who has enough to answer for in false pointings; 'tis in the word *viper*; I would have the verse run thus,

The scorpion, love, must on the wound be bruis'd.[4]

There are a sort of blundering, half-witted people who make a great deal of noise about a verbal slip; though Horace would instruct them better in true criticism:

[1] By John Sheffield, Lord Mulgrave, anonymously published in 1682.
[2] Happy that author where correct essay
Repairs so well our old Horatian way.
[3] 'Of Wit,' st. 6.
[4] In the fourth book of Lucretius, l. 26:
The viper, Love, must on the wound be bruis'd.

non ego paucis
offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
aut humana parum cavit natura.[1]

True judgment in poetry, like that in painting, takes a view of the whole together, whether it be good or not; and where the beauties are more than the faults, concludes for the poet against the little judge; 'tis a sign that malice is hard driven, when 'tis forced to lay hold on a word or syllable; to arraign a man is one thing, and to cavil at him is another. In the midst of an ill natured generation of scribblers, there is always justice enough left in mankind to protect good writers. And they too are obliged, both by humanity and interest, to espouse each other's cause against false critics, who are the common enemies. This last consideration puts me in mind of what I owe to the ingenious and learned translator[2] of Lucretius; I have not here designed to rob him of any part of that commendation which he has so justly acquired by the whole author whose fragments only fall to my portion. What I have now performed is no more than I intended above twenty years ago. The ways of our translation are very different. He follows him more closely than I have done, which became an interpreter of the whole poem. I take more liberty, because it best suited with my design, which was, to make him as pleasing as I could. He had been too voluminous, had he used my method in so long a work, and I had certainly taken his, had I made it my business to translate the whole. The preference then is justly his; and I join with Mr Evelyn[3] in the confession of it, with this additional advantage to him that his reputation is already established in this poet, mine is to make its fortune in the world. If I have been anywhere obscure in following our common author, or if Lucretius himself is to be condemned, I refer myself to his excellent annotations, which I have often read, and always with some new pleasure.

[1] *Ars poetica*, ll. 351-3: 'I shall not find fault with the blots, which either were caused by carelessness or by natural frailty.'

[2] Thomas Creech (1659-1700) of Oxford, whose complete version of Lucretius in heroic couplets had appeared with acclaim in 1682.

[3] John Evelyn was the author of one of a number of complimentary verses prefixed to the early editions. He there confesses that he had himself once aspired to translate Lucretius; but

That glorious enterprise was left for you.
Columbus, thus, only discovered land,
But it was won by great Cortez's hand.

My preface begins already to swell upon me, and looks as if I were afraid of my reader, by so tedious a bespeaking of him; and yet I have Horace and Theocritus upon my hands; but the Greek gentleman shall quickly be dispatched, because I have more business with the Roman.

That which distinguishes Theocritus from all other poets, both Greek and Latin, and which raises him even above Virgil in his Eclogues, is the inimitable tenderness of his passions, and the natural expression of them in words so becoming of a pastoral. A simplicity shines through all he writes: he shows his art and learning by disguising both. His shepherds never rise above their country education in their complaints of love. There is the same difference betwixt him and Virgil, as there is betwixt Tasso's *Aminta* and the *Pastor Fido* of Guarini. Virgil's shepherds are too well read in the philosophy of Epicurus and of Plato; and Guarini's seem to have been bred in courts. But Theocritus and Tasso have taken theirs from cottages and plains. It was said of Tasso, in relation to his similitudes, *mai esce del bosco*: that he never departed from the woods, that is, all his comparisons were taken from the country. The same may be said of our Theocritus: he is softer than Ovid, he touches the passions more delicately, and performs all this out of his own *fond*, without diving into the arts and sciences for a supply. Even his Doric dialect has an incomparable sweetness in its clownishness, like a fair shepherdess in her country russet, talking in a Yorkshire tone. This was impossible for Virgil to imitate; because the severity of the Roman language denied him that advantage. Spenser has endeavoured it in his *Shepherd's Calendar*; but neither will it succeed in English; for which reason I forbore to attempt it. For Theocritus writ to Sicilians, who spoke that dialect; and I direct this part of my translations to our ladies, who neither understand, nor will take pleasure in, such homely expressions. I proceed to Horace.

Take him in parts, and he is chiefly to be considered in his three different talents, as he was a critic, a satirist, and a writer of odes. His morals are uniform, and run through all of them; for let his Dutch commentators say what they will, his philosophy was Epicurean; and he made use of gods and providence only to serve a turn in poetry. But since neither his criticisms (which are the most instructive of any that are written in this

art), nor his satires (which are incomparably beyond Juvenal's, if to laugh and rally is to be preferred to railing and declaiming), are no part of my present undertaking, I confine myself wholly to his odes. These are also of several sorts: some of them are panegyrical, others moral, the rest jovial, or (if I may so call them) bacchanalian. As difficult as he makes it, and as indeed it is, to imitate Pindar, yet in his most elevated flights, and in the sudden changes of his subject with almost imperceptible connections, that Theban poet is his master. But Horace is of the more bounded fancy, and confines himself strictly to one sort of verse, or stanza, in every ode. That which will distinguish his style from all other poets is the elegance of his words, and the numerousness[1] of his verse; there is nothing so delicately turned in all the Roman language. There appears in every part of his diction,[2] or (to speak English) in all his expressions, a kind of noble and bold purity. His words are chosen with as much exactness as Virgil's; but there seems to be a greater spirit in them. There is a secret happiness attends his choice, which in Petronius is called *curiosa felicitas*, and which I suppose he had from the *feliciter audere* of Horace himself.[3] But the most distinguishing part of all his character seems to me to be his briskness, his jollity, and his good humour; and those I have chiefly endeavoured to copy; his other excellencies, I confess, are above my imitation. One ode,[4] which infinitely pleased me in the reading, I have attempted to translate in Pindaric verse: 'tis that which is inscribed to the present Earl of Rochester,[5] to whom I have particular obligations which this small testimony of my gratitude can never pay. 'Tis his darling in the Latin, and I have taken some pains to make it my masterpiece in English: for which reason I took this kind of verse, which allows more

[1] Probably a unique usage, meaning metrical perfection.

[2] Dryden speaks here as if the term were not already established in English, though he had already used the word earlier in this preface (p. 24, above). The earliest recorded use of the word in a similar sense, referring especially to the language of poetry, was already a hundred years old—in Sidney's *Apology for Poetry*.

[3] *Satyricon*, 118; Horace, *Epistles*, II.i.166.

[4] 'Ode 29, Book 3, Paraphrased in Pindaric Verse, and Inscribed to the Right Honourable Laurence, Earl of Rochester.'

[5] Laurence Hyde (1641-1711), second son of the Earl of Clarendon, the Tory Minister praised in *Absalom and Achitophel* (I.888-97) as Hushai, 'of manly steadfastness.' He had been created Earl of Rochester in 1681. Two years later, Dryden and Lee dedicated their *Duke of Guise* to him.

latitude than any other. Every one knows it was introduced into our language, in this age, by the happy genius of Mr Cowley.[1] The seeming easiness of it has made it spread; but it has not been considered enough to be so well cultivated. It languishes in almost every hand but his, and some very few, whom (to keep the rest in countenance) I do not name. He, indeed, has brought it as near perfection as was possible in so short a time. But if I may be allowed to speak my mind modestly, and without injury to his sacred ashes, somewhat of the purity of English, somewhat of more equal thoughts, somewhat of sweetness in the numbers, in one word, somewhat of a finer turn and more lyrical verse is yet wanting. As for the soul of it, which consists in the warmth and vigour of fancy, the masterly figures, and the copiousness of imagination, he has excelled all others in this kind. Yet, if the kind itself be capable of more perfection, though rather in the ornamental parts of it than the essential, what rules of morality or respect have I broken in naming the defects, that they may hereafter be amended? Imitation is a nice point, and there are few poets who deserve to be models in all they write. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is admirable; but am I therefore bound to maintain that there are no flats amongst his elevations, when 'tis evident he creeps along sometimes for above an hundred lines together? Cannot I admire the height of his invention, and the strength of his expression, without defending his antiquated words, and the perpetual harshness of their sound? 'Tis as much commendation as a man can bear to own him excellent; all beyond it is idolatry.[2] Since Pindar was the prince of lyric poets, let me have leave to say that, in imitating him, our numbers should for the most part be lyrical. For variety, or rather where the majesty of thought requires it, they may be stretched to the English heroic of five feet, and to the French alexandrine of six. But the ear must preside, and direct the judgment to the choice of numbers: without the nicety of this, the harmony of Pindaric verse can never be complete; the cadency of one line must be a rule to that of the next; and the sound of the former must slide gently into that which follows, without leaping from one extreme

[1] Cowley's 'Pindaric Odes' were published with the epic *Davideis* in his *Poems* (1656).

[2] Cf. Ben Jonson on Shakespeare: 'I loved the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any' (*Timber*).

into another. It must be done like the shadowings of a picture, which fall by degrees into a darker colour. I shall be glad if I have so explained myself as to be understood; but if I have not, *quod nequeo dicere et sentio tantum*[1] must be my excuse.

There remains much more to be said on this subject; but to avoid envy, I will be silent. What I have said is the general opinion of the best judges, and in a manner has been forced from me by seeing a noble sort of poetry so happily restored by one man, and so grossly copied by almost all the rest. A musical ear, and a great genius, if another Mr Cowley could arise, in another age may bring it to perfection. In the meantime,

fungar vice cotis, acutum
reddere quae ferrum valet, exsors ipsa secandi.[2]

I hope it will not be expected from me that I should say anything of my fellow undertakers in this Miscellany. Some of them are too nearly related to me[3] to be commended without suspicion of partiality; others I am sure need it not; and the rest I have not perused. To conclude, I am sensible that I have written this too hastily and too loosely; I fear I have been tedious and, which is worse, it comes out from the first draft, and uncorrected. This I grant is no excuse; for it may be reasonably urged, why did he not write with more leisure or, if he had it not (which was certainly my case) why did he attempt to write on so nice a subject? The objection is unanswerable, but in part of recompense let me assure the reader that in hasty productions he is sure to meet with an author's present sense, which cooler thoughts would possibly have disguised. There is undoubtedly more of a spirit, though not of judgment, in these uncorrect essays, and consequently though my hazard be the greater, yet the reader's pleasure is not the less.

JOHN DRYDEN.

[1] Juvenal, *Satires*, VII.56 ('qualem nequeo monstrare et sentio tantum'): 'what I cannot describe, and only feel.'

[2] Horace, *Ars poetica*, ll. 304-5: 'I shall play the part of a whetsone, which sharpens steel, though itself incapable of cutting'—the motto to the essay *Of Dramatic Poesy*, vol. I, p. 10, above.

[3] His son Charles had contributed Latin verses, 'Horti Arlingtoniani.' The other contributors are largely unknown.

THE PREFACE

to *Albion and Albanius: an Opera* (1685)

OPERA—ITALIAN, FRENCH, ENGLISH LIBRETTI

Text: folio, 1685.

Dryden's opera, written in collaboration with the French composer Lewis Grabu, was privately played several times before Charles II, shortly before the King's death, and had its first public performance on 6 June 1685, when it ran for six nights only. The news of Monmouth's landing in Dorset may have interrupted its run, but the music (published two years later, with Dryden's libretto) is reason enough. The publication of the folio probably coincided with the public performance. The preface suggests Dryden was eager to make a success of his career as a librettist, and the failure of the opera must have been a disappointment to him. But no one now can wish him to have written more. His discussion of opera shows that the aria ('the songish part') and recitative had already crystallized into distinct musical forms since the first operas were composed in the Florence of the 1590's; but its chief interest lies in its resumption of Dryden's earlier discussions of 'wit' and of poetic 'machines,' and in his views of the musical qualities of English, French, and Italian. It seems ungenerous of him not to mention Davenant, the first English librettist, or his *Siege of Rhodes* (performed in 1656)—he had praised it in the preface to *The Conquest of Granada* (pp. 157f., above)—or their collaboration in *The Tempest* (1670), which he here dismisses. But then he is concerned with recommending his own opera by emphasizing 'the newness of the undertaking' for any English poet.

If wit has truly been defined a propriety of thoughts and words,[1] then that definition will extend to all sorts of poetry; and amongst the rest, to this present entertainment of an opera. Propriety of thought is that fancy which arises naturally from the subject, or which the poet adapts to it. Propriety of words is the clothing of those thoughts with such expressions as are naturally proper to them; and from both these, if they are

[1] Cf. preface to *The State of Innocence*, vol. I, p. 207, above.

judiciously performed, the delight of poetry results. An opera[1] is a poetical tale or fiction, represented by vocal and instrumental music, adorned with scenes, machines, and dancing. The supposed persons of this musical drama are generally supernatural, as gods, and goddesses, and heroes, which at least are descended from them, and are in due time to be adopted into their number. The subject therefore being extended beyond the limits of human nature, admits of that sort of marvellous and surprising conduct which is rejected in other plays. Human impossibilities are to be received as they are in faith; because, where gods are introduced, a supreme power is to be understood, and second causes are out of doors.[2] Yet propriety is to be observed even here. The gods are all to manage their peculiar provinces; and what was atrributed by the heathens to one power ought not to be performed by any other. Phoebus must foretell, Mercury must charm with his caduceus, and Juno must reconcile the quarrels of the marriage-bed. To conclude, they must all act according to their distinct and peculiar characters. If the persons represented were to speak upon the stage, it would follow of necessity that the expressions should be lofty, figurative, and majestical: but the nature of an opera denies the frequent use of those poetical ornaments; for vocal music, though it often admits a loftiness of sound, yet always exacts an harmonious sweetness; or to distinguish yet more justly, the recitative part of the opera requires a more masculine beauty of expression and sound; the other, which (for want of a proper English word) I must call *the songish part*, must abound in the softness and variety of numbers; its principal intention being to please the hearing rather than to gratify the understanding. It appears, indeed, preposterous at first sight that rhyme, on any consideration, should take place of reason. But in order to resolve the problem, this fundamental proposition must be settled, that the first inventors of any art or science, provided they have brought it to perfection, are, in reason, to give laws to it; and according to their model, all after-undertakers are to build. Thus, in epic poetry, no man ought to

[1] The word seems to have been naturalized since 1644, when John Evelyn used it on the earliest recorded occasion in English, on seeing an opera in Rome (*Diary*, 19 November 1644).

[2] Perhaps, as Ker suggests, a reply to St Evremond, *Sur les opéras* (1677), where the French critic is austerely contemptuous of operatic machines: 'Nous outrons le fabuleux des *opéras* par un assemblage confus de dieux, de bergers, de héros, d'enchanteurs, de fantômes, de furies, de démons. . . .'

dispute the authority of Homer, who gave the first being to that masterpiece of art, and endued it with that form of perfection in all its parts that nothing was wanting to its excellency. Virgil therefore, and those very few who have succeeded him, endeavoured not to introduce or innovate any thing in a design already perfected, but imitated the plan of the inventor; and are only so far true heroic poets as they have built on the foundations of Homer. Thus, Pindar, the author of those odes (which are so admirably restored by Mr Cowley in our language), ought for ever to be the standard of them; and we are bound, according to the practice of Horace and Mr Cowley, to copy him. Now, to apply this axiom to our present purpose, whosoever undertakes the writing of an opera (which is a modern invention, though built indeed on the foundations of ethnic worship), is obliged to imitate the design of the Italians, who have not only invented, but brought to perfection, this sort of dramatic musical entertainment. I have not been able, by any search, to get any light, either of the time when it began, or of the first author. But I have probable reasons which induce me to believe that some Italians, having curiously observed the gallantries of the Spanish Moors at their *zambras*, or royal feasts, where music, songs, and dancing were in perfection, together with their machines, which are usual at their *sortijas*, or running at the ring, and other solemnities, may possibly have refined upon those Moresque divertisements, and produced this delightful entertainment, by leaving out the warlike part of the carousels, and forming a poetical design for the use of the machines, the songs, and dances. But however it began (for this is only conjectural), we know that for some centuries the knowledge of music has flourished principally in Italy, the mother of learning and of arts; that poetry and painting have been there restored, and so cultivated by Italian masters that all Europe has been enriched out of their treasury; and the other parts of it, in relation to those delightful arts, are still as much provincial to Italy as they were in the time of the Roman Empire. Their first operas seem to have been intended for the celebration of the marriages of their princes, or for the magnificence of some general time of joy. Accordingly, the expenses of them were from the purse of the sovereign, or of the republic, as they are still practised at Venice, Rome, and other places, at their carnivals. Savoy and Florence have often used them in

their courts, at the weddings of their dukes; and at Turin particularly was performed the *Pastor Fido*, written by the famous Guarini,[1] which is a pastoral opera made to solemnize the marriage of a Duke of Savoy. The prologue of it has given the design to all the French, which is a compliment to the sovereign power by some god or goddess: so that it looks no less than a kind of embassy from heaven to earth. I said, in the beginning of this preface, that the persons represented in operas are generally gods, goddesses, and heroes descended from them, who are supposed to be their peculiar care; which hinders not but that meaner persons may sometimes gracefully be introduced, especially if they have relation to those first times which poets call the Golden Age; wherein by reason of their innocence, those happy mortals were supposed to have had a more familiar intercourse with superior beings; and therefore shepherds might reasonably be admitted, as of all callings the most innocent, the most happy, and who, by reason of the spare time they had, in their almost idle employment, had most leisure to make verses, and to be in love; without somewhat of which passion, no opera can possibly subsist.

'Tis almost needless to speak any thing of that noble language in which this musical drama was first invented and performed. All who are conversant in the Italian cannot but observe that it is the softest, the sweetest, the most harmonious, not only of any modern tongue, but even beyond any of the learned. It seems indeed to have been invented for the sake of poetry and music; the vowels are so abounding in all words, especially in terminations of them, that, excepting some few monosyllables, the whole language ends in them. Then the pronunciation is so manly, and so sonorous, that their very speaking has more of music in it than Dutch poetry and song. It has withal derived so much copiousness and eloquence from the Greek and Latin in the composition of words and the formation of them that (if, after all, we must call it barbarous) 'tis the most beautiful and most learned of any barbarism in modern tongues. And we may, at least, as justly praise it, as Pyrrhus did the Roman discipline and martial order, that it was of barbarians (for so the Greeks called all other nations), but had nothing in it of barbarity. This language

[1] Battista Guarini (1538-1612), the Italian poet whose pastoral drama *Pastor Fido* (1585) had immense vogue, especially in France.

has in a manner been refined and purified from the Gothic, ever since the time of Dante, which is above four hundred years ago; and the French, who now cast a longing eye to their country, are not less ambitious to possess their elegance in poetry and music: in both which they labour at impossibilities. 'Tis true, indeed, they have reformed their tongue, and brought both their prose and poetry to a standard; the sweetness, as well as the purity, is much improved by throwing off the unnecessary consonants which made their spelling tedious, and their pronunciation harsh. But, after all, as nothing can be improved beyond its own species, or farther than its original nature will allow; as an ill voice, though ever so thoroughly instructed in the rules of music, can never be brought to sing harmoniously, nor many an honest critic ever arrive to be a good poet, so neither can the natural harshness of the French, or their perpetual ill accent, be ever refined into perfect harmony like the Italian. The English has yet more natural disadvantages than the French; our original Teutonic consisting most in monosyllables, and those encumbered with consonants, cannot possibly be freed from those inconveniences. The rest of our words, which are derived from the Latin chiefly, and the French, with some small sprinklings of Greek, Italian, and Spanish, are some relief in poetry, and help us to soften our uncouth numbers; which, together with our English genius, incomparably beyond the trifling of the French, in all the nobler parts of verse, will justly give us the pre-eminence. But, on the other hand, the effeminacy of our pronunciation (a defect common to us, and to the Danes), and our scarcity of female rhymes, have left the advantage of musical composition for songs, though not for recitative, to our neighbours.

Through these difficulties I have made a shift to struggle in my part of the performance of this opera; which, as mean as it is, deserves at least a pardon, because it has attempted a discovery beyond any former undertaker of our nation; only remember, that if there be no North-East Passage to be found, the fault is in nature, and not in me; or, as Ben Jonson tells us in *The Alchemist*, when projection had failed, and the glasses were all broken, there was enough however in the bottoms of them to cure the itch;[1] so I may thus far be positive, that if I have not

[1] There will be perhaps
Something about the scraping of the shards
Will cure the itch—though not the itch of mind, Sir. (IV.iii.)

succeeded as I desire, yet there is somewhat still remaining to satisfy the curiosity, or itch of sight and hearing. Yet I have no great reason to despair; for I may, without vanity, own some advantages which are not common to every writer; such as are the knowledge of the Italian and French language, and the being conversant with some of their best performances in this kind; which have furnished me with such variety of measures, as have given the composer, Monsieur Grabut,[1] what occasions he could wish to show his extraordinary talent in diversifying the recitative, the lyrical part, and the chorus; in all which (not to attribute anything to my own opinion) the best judges, and those too of the best quality who have honoured his rehearsals with their presence, have no less commended the happiness of his genius than his skill. And let me have the liberty to add one thing: that he has so exactly expressed my sense in all places where I intended to move the passions, that he seems to have entered into my thoughts, and to have been the poet as well as the composer. This I say, not to flatter him, but to do him right; because amongst some English musicians and their scholars (who are sure to judge after them), the imputation of being a Frenchman is enough to make a party who maliciously endeavour to decry him. But the knowledge of Latin and Italian poets, both which he possesses, besides his skill in music, and his being acquainted with all the performances of the French operas, adding to these the good sense to which he is born, have raised him to a degree above any man who shall pretend to be his rival on our stage. When any of our countrymen excel him, I shall be glad, for the sake of old England, to be shown my error; in the meantime, let virtue be commended, though in the person of a stranger.

If I thought it convenient, I could here discover some rules which I have given to myself in the writing of an opera in general, and of this opera in particular: but I consider that the effect would only be to have my own performance measured by the laws I gave; and consequently to set up some little judges who, not understanding throughly, would be sure to fall upon the

[1] Lewis Grabu(t), a French musician, had come to England in 1665 and promptly been appointed composer to the King's Music. Dryden must have been sadly disillusioned in his estimate of Grabu's talent by the reception of their opera, and was eminently lucky to exchange him, years later, for Henry Purcell.

faults, and not to acknowledge any of the beauties (an hard measure, which I have often found from false critics). Here, therefore, if they will criticize, they shall do it out of their own *fond*; but let them be first assured that their ears are nice; for there is neither writing nor judging on this subject without that good quality. 'Tis no easy matter in our language to make words so smooth, and numbers so harmonious, that they shall almost set themselves, and yet there are rules for this in nature, and as great a certainty of quantity in our syllables, as either in the Greek or Latin. But let poets and judges understand those first, and then let them begin to study English. When they have chawed awhile upon these preliminaries, it may be they will scarce adventure to tax me with want of thought and elevation of fancy in this work; for they will soon be satisfied that those are not of the nature of this sort of writing. The necessity of double rhymes, and ordering of the words and numbers for the sweetness of the voice, are the main hinges on which an opera must move; and both of these are without the compass of any art to teach another to perform, unless nature in the first place has done her part, by enduing the poet with that nicety of hearing, that the discord of sounds in words shall as much offend him as a seventh in music would a good composer. I have therefore no need to make excuses for meanness of thought in many places. The Italians, with all the advantages of their language, are continually forced upon it; or rather affect it. The chief secret is in the choice of words; and by this choice I do not here mean elegancy of expression, but propriety of sound, to be varied according to the nature of the subject. Perhaps a time may come when I may treat of this more largely, out of some observations which I have made from Homer and Virgil who, amongst all the poets, only understood the art of numbers, and of that which was properly called *rhythmus* by the ancients.

The same reasons which depress thought in an opera have a stronger effect upon the words, especially in our language; for there is no maintaining the purity of English in short measures, where the rhyme returns so quick, and is so often female, or double rhyme, which is not natural to our tongue, because it consists too much of monosyllables, and those too most commonly clogged with consonants; for which reason I am often forced to coin new words, revive some that are antiquated, and

botch others; as if I had not served out my time in poetry, but was bound apprentice to some doggerel rhymer, who makes songs to tunes, and sings them for a livelihood. 'Tis true, I have not been often put to this drudgery; but where I have, the words will sufficiently show that I was then a slave to the composition, which I will never be again: 'tis my part to invent, and the musician's to humour that invention. I may be counselled, and will always follow my friend's advice where I find it reasonable; but will never part with the power of the militia.

I am now to acquaint my reader with somewhat more particular concerning this opera, after having begged his pardon for so long a preface to so short a work. It was originally intended only for a prologue to a play of the nature of the *Tempest*; which is a tragedy mixed with opera, or a drama written in blank verse, adorned with scenes, machines, songs, and dances, so that the fable of it is all spoken and acted by the best of the comedians; the other part of the entertainment to be performed by the same singers and dancers who are introduced in this present opera. It cannot properly be called a play, because the action of it is supposed to be conducted sometimes by supernatural means, or magic; nor an opera, because the story of it is not sung. But more of this at its proper time. But some intervening accidents having hitherto deferred the performance of the main design, I proposed to the actors to turn the intended prologue into an entertainment by itself, as you now see it, by adding two acts more to what I had already written. The subject of it is wholly allegorical; and the allegory itself so very obvious that it will no sooner be read than understood. 'Tis divided, according to the plain and natural method of every action, into three parts. For even Aristotle himself is contented to say simply that in all actions there is a beginning, a middle, and an end;[1] after which model all the Spanish plays are built.[2]

The descriptions of the scenes and other decorations of the stage I had from Mr Betterton, who has spared neither for industry, nor cost, to make this entertainment perfect, nor for invention of the ornaments to beautify it.

To conclude, tho' the enemies of the composer are not few, and that there is a party formed against him of his own profession, I hope, and am persuaded, that this prejudice will turn in the

[1] *Poetics*, vii. [2] Cf. *Of Dramatic Poesy*, vol. I, p. 48, above.

end to his advantage. For the greatest part of an audience is always uninterested, though seldom knowing; and if the music be well composed, and well performed, they who find themselves pleased will be so wise as not be imposed upon, and fooled out of their satisfaction. The newness of the undertaking is all the hazard. When operas were first set up in France, they were not followed over eagerly; but they gained daily upon their hearers, till they grew to that height of reputation which they now enjoy. The English, I confess, are not altogether so musical as the French; and yet they have been pleased already with the *Tempest*, and some pieces that followed, which were neither much better written nor so well composed as this. If it finds encouragement, I dare promise myself to mend my hand by making a more pleasing fable. In the meantime, every loyal Englishman cannot but be satisfied with the moral of this, which so plainly represents the double restoration of his Sacred Majesty.

Postscript

This preface being wholly written before the death of my late Royal Master (*quem semper acerbum, semper honoratum, sic dii voluistis, habebo*[1]), I have now lately reviewed it, as supposing I should find many notions in it that would require correction on cooler thoughts. After four months lying by me, I looked on it as no longer mine, because I had wholly forgotten it; but I confess with some satisfaction, and perhaps a little vanity, that I found myself entertained by it; my own judgment was new to me, and pleased me when I looked on it, as another man's. I see no opinion that I would retract or alter, unless it be that possibly the Italians went not so far as Spain for the invention of their operas. They might have it in their own country; and that by gathering up the shipwrecks of the Athenian and Roman theatres, which we know were adorned with scenes, music, dances, and machines, especially the Grecian. But of this the learned Monsieur Vossius,[2] who has made our nation his second country, is the best, and perhaps the only judge now living. As for the opera itself, it was all composed, and was just ready

[1] *Aeneid*, v.49-50: '[This day] I shall keep (such O gods, was your will) ever as a day of grief, ever of honour.' Charles II had died on 6 February 1685.
[2] Isaac Vossius (1618-89), a Dutch theologian who had settled in England and who became Canon of Windsor.

to have been performed, when he, in honour of whom it was principally made, was taken from us.

He had been pleased twice or thrice to command that it should be practised before him, especially the first and third acts of it; and publicly declared more than once that the composition and choruses were more just and more beautiful than any he had heard in England. How nice an ear he had in music is sufficiently known; his praise therefore has established the reputation of it above censure, and made it in a manner sacred. 'Tis therefore humbly and religiously dedicated to his memory.

It might reasonably have been expected that his death must have changed the whole fabric of the opera; or at least a great part of it. But the design of it originally was so happy that it needed no alteration, properly so called; for the addition of twenty or thirty lines, in the apotheosis of Albion, has made it entirely of a piece. This was the only way which could have been invented to save it from a botched ending; and it fell luckily into my imagination. As if there were a kind of fatality even in the most trivial things concerning the succession; a change was made, and not for the worse, without the least confusion or disturbance. And those very causes which seemed to threaten us with troubles conspired to produce our lasting happiness.

THE PREFACE

to *Don Sebastian* (1690)

LENGTH OF PLAYS—A JUSTIFICATION OF THE TRAGEDY

Text: 4°, 1690.

Dryden's first play in seven years was performed in December 1689, and the quarto appeared early in January 1690. His court posts, and with them his regular income, disappeared with the advent of William and Mary in 1689, and the last decade of his life he endured half defiantly, half in self-pity, a faithful Catholic and Jacobite forced to turn again to the theatre for a living. The preface to this first play of the final period suggests how reluctant that decision was.

WHETHER it happened through a long disuse of writing[1] that I forgot the usual compass of a play; or that by crowding it with characters and incidents, I put a necessity upon myself of lengthening the main action, I know not; but the first day's audience sufficiently convinced me of my error; and that the poem was insupportably too long. 'Tis an ill ambition of us poets to please an audience with more than they can bear: and supposing that we wrote as well as vainly we imagine ourselves to write; yet we ought to consider that no man can bear to be long tickled. There is a nauseousness in a City feast when we are to sit four hours after we are cloyed. I am, therefore, in the first place, to acknowledge with all manner of gratitude their civility, who were pleased to endure it with so much patience, to be weary with so much good nature and silence, and not to explode an entertainment which was designed to please them; or discourage an author whose misfortunes have once more brought him against his will upon the stage. While I continue in these

[1] Apart from the opera *Albion and Albanius* (1685), Dryden had not written a play to be performed since *The Duke of Guise* (1683), acted late in 1682.

bad circumstances (and truly I see very little probability of coming out) I must be obliged to write, and if I may still hope for the same kind usage, I shall the less repent of that hard necessity. I write not this out of any expectation to be pitied; for I have enemies enow to wish me yet in a worse condition; but give me leave to say that if I can please by writing, as I shall endeavour it, the town may be somewhat obliged to my misfortunes for a part of their diversion. Having been longer acquainted with the stage than any poet now living, and having observed how difficult it was to please: that the humours of comedy were almost spent, that love and honour (the mistaken topics of tragedy) were quite worn out, that the theatres could not support their charges, that the audience forsook them, that young men without learning set up for judges, and that they talked loudest who understood the least: all these discouragements had not only weaned me from the stage, but had also given me a loathing of it.

But enough of this: the difficulties continue; they increase, and I am still condemned to dig in those exhausted mines. Whatever fault I next commit, rest assured it shall not be that of too much length: above twelve hundred lines have been cut off from this tragedy since it was first delivered to the actors.[1] They were indeed so judiciously lopped by Mr Betterton, to whose care and excellent action I am equally obliged, that the connection of the story was not lost; but on the other side, it was impossible to prevent some part of the action from being precipitated, and coming on without that due preparation which is required to all great events: as in particular, that of raising the mobile[2] in the beginning of the fourth act, which a man of Benducar's cool character could not naturally attempt without taking all those precautions which he foresaw would be necessary to render his design successful. On this consideration, I have replaced those lines through the whole poem; and thereby restored it to that clearness of conception and (if I may dare to say it) that lustre and masculine vigour in which it was first written. 'Tis obvious to every understanding reader that the most poetical parts, which

[1] The quarto text is of about four thousand lines, but Dryden's language here is so ambiguous that it is not clear whether all of the cuts were restored by the poet for the printed text.

[2] I.e. *mobile vulgus*, already abbreviated to 'mob' earlier in the seventeenth century.

are descriptions, images, similitudes, and moral sentences, are those which of necessity were to be pared away when the body was swollen into too large a bulk for the representation of the stage. But there is a vast difference betwixt a public entertainment on the theatre, and a private reading in the closet: in the first we are confined to time, and though we talk not by the hour-glass, yet the watch often drawn out of the pocket warns the actors that their audience is weary; in the last, every reader is judge of his own convenience; he can take up the book, and lay it down at his pleasure; and find out those beauties of propriety in thought and writing which escaped him in the tumult and hurry of representing. And I dare boldly promise for this play that in the roughness of the numbers and cadences (which I assure was not casual, but so designed) you will see somewhat more masterly arising to your view than in most, if not any, of my former tragedies. There is more noble daring in the figures, and more suitable to the loftiness of the subject; and besides this, some newnesses of English, translated from the beauties of modern tongues, as well as from the elegancies of the Latin; and here and there some old words are sprinkled which, for their significance and sound, deserved not to be antiquated; such as we often find in Sallust amongst the Roman authors, and in Milton's *Paradise* amongst ours; though perhaps the latter, instead of sprinkling, has dealt them with too free a hand, even sometimes to the obscuring of his sense.

As for the story or plot of the tragedy, 'tis purely fiction; for I take it up where the history[1] has laid it down. We are assured by all writers of those times that Sebastian, a young prince of great courage and expectation, undertook that war partly upon a religious account, partly at the solicitation of Muley-Mahumet, who had been driven out of his dominions by Abdelmelech, or as others call him, Muley-Moluch, his nigh kinsman, who

[1] Langbaine suggests that Dryden's chief sources were a Portuguese history by Vasconcellos, and an anonymous French historical novel recently translated by the prolific Ferrand Spence as *Don Sebastian* (1683). Prince Sebastian (1554-78), a national hero of Portugal, had led a belated crusade against Morocco in 1574 and a second in 1578, to conquer the kingdom for the exile Muley-Moluch. He and his army were utterly destroyed by the Moors, and his body, after being identified by his surviving soldiers, was buried with great honour. But the rumour persisted among the Portuguese that one day he would return, and several pretenders claimed to be Sebastian.

descended from the same family of the Xeriffs; whose fathers Hamet and Mahomet had conquered that empire with joint forces, and shared it betwixt them after their victory; that the body of Don Sebastian was never found in the field of battle, which gave occasion for many to believe that he was not slain; that some years after, when the Spaniards, with a pretended title, by force of arms had usurped the Crown of Portugal from the House of Braganza,[1] a certain person[2] who called himself Don Sebastian, and had all the marks of his body and features of his face, appeared at Venice, where he was owned by some of his countrymen; but being seized by the Spaniards, was first imprisoned, then sent to the galleys, and at last put to death in private. 'Tis most certain that the Portuguese expected his return for almost an age together after that battle; which is at least a proof of their extreme love to his memory; and the usage which they had from their new conquerors might possible make them so extravagant in their hopes and wishes for their old master.

This groundwork the history afforded me, and I desire no better to build a play upon it. For where the event of a great action is left doubtful, there the poet is left master. He may raise what he pleases on that foundation, provided he makes it of a piece, and according to the rules of probability. From hence I was only obliged that Sebastian should return to Portugal no more; but at the same time I had him at my own disposal, whether to bestow him in Africa, or in any other corner of the world, or to have closed the tragedy with his death; and the last of these was certainly the most easy but, for the same reason, the least artful; because, as I have somewhere said, the poison and the dagger are still at hand to butcher a hero, when a poet wants the brains to save him.[3] It being therefore only necessary, according to the laws of the drama, that Sebastian should no more be seen upon the throne, I leave it for the world to judge whether or no I have disposed of him according to art, or have bungled up the conclusion of his adventure. In the drawing of his character I forgot not piety, which any one may observe to be one principal ingredient of it; even so far as to be a habit in him; though I show him once to be transported from it by the

[1] Portugal was annexed to Spain from 1580 to 1640.
[2] Marco Tullio, an Italian peasant, who in 1603 claimed to be Sebastian.
[3] Cf. preface to *The Spanish Friar*, vol. I, p. 279, above.

violence of a sudden passion, to endeavour a self-murther. This being presupposed, that he was religious, the horror of his incest, tho' innocently committed, was the best reason which the stage could give for hindering his return. 'Tis true I have no right to blast his memory with such a crime: but declaring it to be fiction, I desire my audience to think it no longer true than while they are seeing it represented. For that once ended, he may be a saint, for aught I know; and we have reason to presume he is. On this supposition, it was unreasonable to have killed him; for the learned Mr Rymer has well observed that in all punishments we are to regulate ourselves by poetical justice;[1] and according to those measures, an involuntary sin deserves not death; from whence it follows that to divorce himself from the beloved object, to retire into a desert, and deprive himself of a throne, was the utmost punishment which the poet could inflict, as it was also the utmost reparation which Sebastian could make.

For what relates to Almeyda, her part is wholly fictitious: I know it is the surname of a noble family in Portugal which was very instrumental in the restoration of Don John de Braganza, father to the most illustrious and most pious princess our Queen Dowager.[2] The French author of a novel called *Don Sebastian*[3] has given that name to an African lady of his own invention, and makes her sister to Muley-Mahumet. But I have wholly changed the accidents, and borrowed nothing but the supposition that she was beloved by the King of Portugal. Tho', if I had taken the whole story, and wrought it up into a play, I might have done it exactly according to the practice of almost all the Ancients; who were never accused of being plagiaries for building their tragedies on known fables. Thus Augustus Caesar wrote an *Ajax*,[4] which was not less his own because Euripides[5] had written a play before him on that subject. Thus, of late years, Corneille writ an *Oedipus* after Sophocles; and I have designed

[1] Cf. 'The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy,' vol. I, p. 245n., above.

[2] Queen Catherine, widow of Charles II and daughter of John IV of Portugal (1640-56), the first king of Portgual after the restoration of independence. Catherine of Braganza had remained in England, in spite of the political embarrassments caused by her Catholicism, until 1692, when she returned to Portugal.

[3] Cf. p. 46n., above.

[4] Cf. preface to *The Rival Ladies*, vol. I, p. 3n., above.

[5] In fact, *Ajax* is one of Sophocles's seven extant tragedies.

one after him, which I wrote with Mr Lee, yet neither the French poet stole from the Greek, nor we from the Frenchman.[1] 'Tis the contrivance, the new turn, and new characters, which alter the property and make it ours. The *materia poetica* is as common to all writers as the *materia medica* to all physicians. Thus, in our chronicles, Daniel's *History*[2] is still his own, though Matthew Paris, Stowe, and Holinshed writ before him; otherwise we must have been content with their dull relations, if a better pen had not been allowed to come after them, and write his own account after a new and better manner.

I must farther declare freely that I have not exactly kept to the three mechanic rules of unity: I knew them, and had them in my eye, but followed them only at a distance; for the genius of the English cannot bear too regular a play; we are given to variety, even to a debauchery of pleasure. My scenes are therefore sometimes broken, because my under-plot required them so to be; though the general scene remains of the same castle; and I have taken the time of two days, because the variety of accidents which are here represented could not naturally be supposed to arrive in one. But to gain a greater beauty, 'tis lawful for a poet to supersede a less.

I must likewise own that I have somewhat deviated from the known history in the death of Muley-Moluch who, by all relations, died of a fever in the battle, before his army had wholly won the field; but if I have allowed him another day of life, it was because I stood in need of so shining a character of brutality as I have given him; which is indeed the same with that of the present Muley Ishmael,[3] as some of our English officers who have been in his court have credibly informed me.

I have been listing what objections have been made against the conduct of the play, but found them all so trivial that if I should name them, a true critic would imagine that I played booty[4] and only raised up phantoms for myself to conquer. Some are pleased to say the writing is dull; but *aetatem habet, de se loquatur*.[5] Others that the double poison is unnatural;

[1] Cf. preface to *Oedipus*, vol. I, pp. 232f., above.
[2] Samuel Daniel (1562-1619), *The History of England* (1612-8?).
[3] Sultan of Morocco since 1672.
[4] I.e. deliberately badly, as in a card-game, in order to plunder one player by conspiracy with another. Cf. Addison, *Spectator*, no. 60.
[5] John 9.21 ('ipse de se') (Vulgate): 'He is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself' (Authorized Version).

let the common received opinion, and Ausonius his famous epigram, answer that.[1] Last, a more ignorant sort of creatures than either of the former maintain that the character of Dorax is not only unnatural, but inconsistent with itself; let them read the play and think again, and if yet they are not satisfied, cast their eyes on that chapter of the wise Montaigne which is intituled 'De l'inconstance des actions humaines.'[2] A longer reply is what those cavillers deserve not; but I will give them and their fellows to understand that the Earl of Dorset was pleased to read the tragedy twice over before it was acted; and did me the favour to send me word that I had written beyond any of my former plays; and that he was displeased any thing should be cut away. If I have not reason to prefer his single judgment to a whole faction, let the world be judge; for the opposition is the same with that of Lucan's hero against an army: *concurrere bellum atque virum*.[3] I think I may modestly conclude that whatever errors there may be, either in the design or writing of this play, they are not which have been objected to it. I think also that I am not yet arrived to the age of doting; and that I have given so much application to this poem that I could not probably let it run into many gross absurdities; which may caution my enemies from too rash a censure; and may also encourage my friends, who are many more than I could reasonably have expected, to believe their kindness has not been very undeservedly bestowed on me. This was not a play that was huddled up in haste; and to shew it was not, I will own that beside the general moral of it, which is given in the four last lines,[4] there is also another moral, couched under every one of the principal parts and characters, which a judicious critic will observe, though I point not to it in this preface. And there may be also some secret beauties in the decorum of parts, and uniformity of design, which my puny judges will not easily find out; let them consider in the last scene of the fourth act whether I have not preserved the rule of decency in giving all the advantage to the royal character; and in making Dorax first submit.

[1] *Epig.* III, 'In Eumpinam adulteram.'
[2] *Essais*, II.i, 'De l'inconstance de nos actions.'
[3] *Pharsalia*, vi.191-2: 'a man to fight an army.'
[4]
And let Sebastian and Almeyda's fate
This dreadful sentence to the world relate,
That unrepented crimes of parents dead
Are justly punished on their children's head.

Perhaps too they may have thought that it was through indigence of characters that I have given the same to Sebastian and Almeyda; and consequently made them alike in all things but their sex. But let them look a little deeper into the matter, and they will find that this identity of character in the greatness of their souls was intended for a preparation of the final discovery, and that the likeness of their nature was a fair hint to the proximity of their blood.

To avoid the imputation of too much vanity (for all writers, and especially poets, will have some), I will give but one other instance, in relation to the uniformity of the design. I have observed that the English will not bear a thorough tragedy;[1] but are pleased that it should be lightened with under-parts of mirth. It had been easy for me to have given my audience a better course of comedy, I mean a more diverting, than that of Antonio and Morayma. But I dare appeal even to my enemies, if I or any man could have invented one which had been more of a piece, and more depending on the serious part of the design. For what could be more uniform than to draw from out of the members of a captive court the subject of a comical entertainment? To prepare this episode, you see Dorax giving the character of Antonio, in the beginning of the play, upon his first sight of him at the lottery; and to make the dependence, Antonio is engaged in the fourth act for the deliverance of Almeyda; which is also prepared by his being first made a slave to the captain of the rabble.

I should beg pardon for these instances; but perhaps they may be of use to future poets in the conduct of their plays. At least, if I appear too positive, I am growing old, and thereby in possession of some experience which men in years will always assume for a right of talking. Certainly, if a man can ever have reason to set a value on himself, 'tis when his ungenerous enemies are taking the advantage of the times upon him, to ruin him in his reputation. And therefore, for once, I will make bold to take the counsel of my old master Virgil:

tu ne cede malis; sed, contra, audentior ito.[2]

[1] I.e. a tragedy observing the three unities; cf. p. 49, above.
[2] *Aeneid*, vi.95: 'Do not yield to evil; but go forth to face it the more boldly.'

LETTER TO WILLIAM WALSH

early 1691?

ADVICE ON STYLE TO A YOUNG POET

Text: first printed in *Poetical Works of Dryden*, ed. Robert Bell (1854) I. 68-70; *Ward*, no. 17. No ms. is known.

The letter is a reply to Walsh's letter (*Ward*, no. 16), written probably in the course of 1690, inviting Dryden to comment on some of his verses and on *A Dialogue Concerning Women*, published later in 1691 with a preface by Dryden. Walsh (1663-1708) was a young gentleman of fashion, some 32 years Dryden's junior. He later entered Parliament, as a Whig, in 1698, and in the last two years of his life engaged in an influential correspondence with the young Alexander Pope. Dryden later called him 'without flattery, . . . the best critic of our nation' (p. 261, below); but though the remains of Walsh's criticism are too scanty to pass judgment, the tone of his letters suggests that Dryden had, as usual, some motive of flattery. His letters, though models of elderly tact towards the importunities of the young, suggest a veiled contempt for Walsh's literary gifts. Johnson, in his life of Walsh, said that his verse 'seldom rises higher than to be pretty'; in its unrevised state, as Dryden saw it, it seems to have been something less than that.

YOU command me, dear Sir, to make a kind of critique on your essay:[1] 'tis a hard province; but if I were able to undertake it, possibly a greater proof of friendship is scarcely to be found; where to be truly a friend, a man must seem to exercise a little malice. As it happens, I am now encumbered with some necessary business relating to one of my sons; which, when it is over, I shall have more leisure to obey you, in case there appear any farther need.

There is not the least occasion of reflecting on your disposition of the piece, nor the thoughts. I see nothing to censure in

[1] *A Dialogue Concerning Women* (1691), to which Dryden contributed a preface.

either of them. Besides this, the style is easy and natural; as fit for dialogue, as if you had set Tully before you; and as gallant as Fontenelle in his *Plurality of Worlds.*[1] In the correctness of the English there is not much for me to animadvert. Be pleased, therefore, to avoid the words *don't*, *can't*, *shan't*, and the like abbreviations of syllables; which seem to me to savour of a little rusticity. As for pedantry, you are not to be taxed with it. I remember I hinted somewhat of concluding your sentences with prepositions or conjunctions sometimes, which is not elegant, as in your first sentence—(See the consequences of). I find, likewise, that you make not a due distinction betwixt *that* and *who*: *a man that* is not proper; the relative *who* is proper. *That* ought always to signify a thing; *who*, a person. *An acquaintance that would have undertook the business*; true English is *an acquaintance who would have undertaken the business.*

I am confident I need not proceed with these little criticisms, which are rather cavillings. *Philareque*,[2] or the critique on Balzac, observes it as a fault in his style that he has in many places written twenty words together (*en suitte*) which were all monosyllables. I observe this in some lines of your noble epigram: and am often guilty of it myself through hastiness. Mr Waller counted this a virtue of the English tongue that it could bring so many words of the Teutonic together, and yet the smoothness of the verse not vitiated.

Now I am speaking of your epigram, I am sure you will not be offended with me for saying there is some imperfection in the two last lines.

> Blend 'em together, Fate, ease both their pain;
> And of two wretches make one happy man.[3]

[1] *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (1686), a popular study in Cartesian astronomy.

[2] *Lettres de Phyllarque à Ariste où il est traité de l'éloquence française* (1627), by Father Jean Goulu, Letter xxi, where Goulu criticizes Jean Louis Guez de Balzac (1596-1654), the author of a popular collection of *Lettres* (1624), for 'la suitte de quinze petits mots, dont les treize sont monosyllabes.' Cf. p. 246, below.

[3] Walsh accepted in essence all of Dryden's suggestions to improve his epigram 'Gripe and Shifter.' His final version, posthumously published in *The Works of William Walsh* (1736), p. 43, reads as follows:

> Rich Gripe does all his thoughts and cunning bend
> T'increase that wealth he wants the soul to spend.
> Poor Shifter does his whole contrivance set
> To spend that wealth he wants the sense to get.

The word *blend* includes the sense of *together*; *ease both their pain*: *pain* is singular, *both* is plural. But indeed *pain* may have a collective and plural signification. Then, the rhyme is not full of *pain* and *man*. An half rhyme is not always a fault; but in the close of any paper of verses, 'tis to be avoided. And after all, tell me truly, if those words *ease both their pain* were not superfluous in the sense, and only put for the sake of the rhyme, and filling up the verse. It came into my head to alter them, and I am afraid for the worse.

Kind Fate or Fortune, blend them if you can:
And of two wretches make one happy man.

Kind Fate looks a little harsh: *Fate* without an epithet is always taken in the ill sense. *Kind* added changes the signification. (*fati valet hora benigni*[1]). The words *if you can* have almost the same fault I taxed in your ending of the line: but being better considered, that is, whether Fortune or Fate can alter a man's temper who is already so tempered: and leaving it doubtful, I think, does not prejudice the thought in the last line. Now I begin to be in for cakes and ale; and why should I not put a *quære* on those other lines?

Poor Shift does all his whole contrivance set
To spend that wealth he wants the sense to get.

All his whole contrivance is but all his contrivance, or his whole contrivance; thus one of those words looks a little like tautology. Then, an ill-natured man might ask how he could spend wealth, not having the sense to get it. But this is trifling in me. For your sense is very intelligible; which is enough to secure it. And, by your favour, so is Martial's:

viribus hic non est, hic non est utilis annis:[2]

How happy would appear to each his fate,
Had Gripe his humour, or he Gripe's estate.
Kind Fate and Fortune, blend 'em if you can,
And of two wretches make one happy man.

[1] Juvenal, *Satires*, XVI, 4: 'one hour of kind fate is good.'

[2] In reply to Walsh's criticism of Martial's epigram (XI, lxxxi, l. 3) in his preceding letter to Dryden (*Ward*, no. 16). The line actually reads:

viribus hic, operi non est hic utilis annis.

'I remember,' wrote Walsh, 'you said when we talked about these things at the coffee-house, that there were not above 20 good epigrams in Martial, and I'll undertake when you have chose those 20 to make some reasonable objection against one half of 'em, particularly in that which you say is the best of the book,' and he proceeds to criticize the line quoted above.

and yet in exactness of criticism your censure stands good upon him.

I am called to dinner, and have only time to add a great truth; that I am from the bottom of my soul, dear Sir, your most humble servant and true lover,

JOHN DRYDEN.

Your apostrophes to your mistress, where you break off the third of your discourse, and address yourself to her, are in my opinion as fine turns of gallantry as I have met with anywhere.

For my honoured friend,
William Walsh, Esqr.
These.

THE CHARACTER [OF ST EVREMOND]

Prefixed to *Miscellaneous Essays by Monsieur de St Evremond, Translated out of French* (1692)

ST EVREMOND AS CRITIC—A DEFENCE OF VIRGIL

Text: 8°, 1692.

Charles de Marguetel de Saint-Denis de St Evremond (1610-1703), a French nobleman and man of letters, had been exiled by Mazarin in 1661 and spent almost all the rest of his long life in England. Dryden certainly knew him personally, and must have found his dry, free-thinking wit congenial, though St Evremond seems to have learnt little English, and was probably incapable of reading an English play or of following one in the theatre. His literary tastes were conservative, and he belonged to the generation of Frenchman that preferred Corneille to Racine. Cf. St Evremond, *Letters*, ed. John Hayward (1930). The 'Character' is a curiously ordered preface to this collection of translations of his critical and moral essays, evidently prepared—though St Evremond had an aristocratic distaste for seeing his own works in print—to forestall pirating. The title-page of this first volume (the second appeared in 1694) speaks of 'A Character by a Person of Honour here in England, Continued by Mr Dryden.' The 'person of honour' seems to have been Knightley Chetwood, according to the statement in the 1728 edition of St Evremond's *Works* (p. 2); but it is not clear why Dryden should have been called in to 'continue' a preface he was eminently fitted to write alone.

I KNOW how nice an undertaking it is to write of a living author: yet the example of Father Bouhours[1] has somewhat encouraged me in this attempt. Had not Monsieur St Evremond been very considerable in his own country, that famous Jesuit would not have ventured to praise a person in disgrace with the Government of France, and living here in banishment. Yet in his *Pensées ingénieuses* he has often cited our author's thoughts and his

[1] Dominique Bouhours (1628-1702), the French Jesuit philologist, whose *Pensées ingénieuses des Anciens et des Modernes* appeared in Paris in 1691.

expressions as the standard of judicious thinking and graceful speaking. An undoubted sign that his merit was sufficiently established, when the disfavour of the Court could not prevail against it. There is not only a justness in his conceptions, which is the foundation of good writing, but also a purity of language and a beautiful turn of words so little understood by modern writers, and which indeed was found at Rome but at the latter end of the Commonwealth, and ended with Petronius under the Monarchy. If I durst extend my judgment to particulars, I would say that our author has determined very nicely in his opinion of Epicurus; and that what he has said of his morals is according to nature, and reason.[1] 'Tis true that, as I am a religious admirer of Virgil, I could wish that he had not discovered our father's nakedness.[2] But, after all, we must confess that Aeneas was none of the greatest heroes, and that Virgil was sensible of it himself. But what could he do? The Trojan on whom he was to build the Roman Empire had been already vanquished; he had lost his country, and was a fugitive. Nay more, he had fought unsuccessfully with Diomedes, and was only preserved from death by his mother Goddess, who received a wound in his defence. So that Virgil, bound as he was to follow the footsteps of Homer, who had thus described him,[3] could not reasonably have altered his character, and raised him in Italy to a much greater height of prowess than he found him formerly in Troy. Since therefore he could make no more of him in valour, he resolved not to give him that virtue as his principal, but chose another, which was piety. 'Tis true this latter, in the composition of a hero, was not altogether so shining as the former; but it entitled him more to the favour of the Gods, and their protection in all his undertakings. And, which was the poet's chiefest aim, made a nearer resemblance betwixt Aeneas and his patron Augustus Caesar, who above all things loved to be flattered for being pious, both to the gods and his relations.

[1] *Miscellaneous Essays*, *op. cit.*, I.214-15 ('A Judgment upon those Sciences which a Gentleman should apply himself to'), where St Evremond, discussing Julius Caesar's Epicureanism, claimed that 'there were two sorts of Epicureans, the one teaching philosophy in retirements, according to precept; the other, who could not approve of the austerity of too rigid philosophers, gave way only to more natural opinions.'

[2] In the passage attacking Segrais's *Enëide* (1668) in the 'Reflections upon the French Translators,' *Miscellaneous Essays*, *op. cit.*, I.178f.

[3] *Iliad*, V.

And that very piety, or gratitude (call it which you please) to the memory of his Uncle Julius gave him the preference amongst the soldiers of Mark Anthony; and consequently raised him to the Empire. As for personal courage, that of Augustus was not pushing; and the poet, who was not ignorant of that defect, for that reason durst not ascribe it in the supreme degree to him who was to represent his Emperor under another name: which was managed by him with the most imaginable fineness, for had valour been set uppermost, Augustus must have yielded to Agrippa. After all, this is rather to defend the courtier than the poet; and to make his hero escape again under the covert of a cloud.[1] Only we may add what I think Bossu says,[2] that the Roman Commonwealth, being now changed into a Monarchy, Virgil was helping to that design, by insinuating into the people the piety of their new conqueror, to make them the better brook this innovation, which was brought on them by a man who was favoured by the gods. Yet we may observe that Virgil forgot not, upon occasion, to speak honourably of Aeneas in point of courage, and that particularly in the person by whom he was overcome. For Diomedes compares him with Hector, and even with advantage:

> quicquid apud durae cessatum est moenia Trojae;
> Hectoris, Aeneaque manu victoria Graium
> haesit, et in decimum vestigia rettulit annum:
> ambo animis, ambo insignes praestantibus armis;
> hic pietate prior.[3]

As for that particular passage cited by Monsieur de St Evremond, where Aeneas shows the utmost fear in the beginning of a tempest:

> extemplo Aeneae solvuntur frigore membra, etc.[4]

[1] I.e. as Venus rescued her son Aeneas in combat with Diomedes.
[2] *Traité du poème épique* (1675), IV.ix.
[3] *Aeneid*, xi.288-92:

> The long defence the Trojan people made,
> The war protracted, and the siege delay'd,
> Were due to Hector's and this hero's hand:
> Both brave alike, and equal in command;
> Aeneas, not inferior in the field,
> In pious reverence to the gods excell'd.
> (Dryden's translation, xi.443-8.)

[4] *Ibid.*, I.92: 'Aeneas's limbs at once are enfeebled with a chilling fear. . . .'

Why may it not be supposed that having been long at sea, he might be well acquainted with the nature of a storm, and by the rough beginning forsee the increase and danger of it? At least, as a Father of his People, his concernment might be greater for them than for himself. And if so, what the poet takes from the merit of his courage is added to the prime virtue of his character, which was his piety. Be this said, with all manner of respect and deference to the opinion of Monsieur St Evremond, amongst whose admirable talents that of penetration is not the least: he generally dives into the very bottom of his authors, searches into the inmost recesses of their souls, and brings up with him those hidden treasures which had escaped the diligence of others. His examination of the *Grand Alexandre*,[1] in my opinion, is an admirable piece of criticism; and I doubt not but that his observations on the English theatre had been as absolute in their kind, had he seen with his own eyes, and not with those of other men. But conversing in a manner wholly with the Court, which is not always the truest judge, he has been unavoidably led into mistakes, and given to some of our coarsest poets[2] a reputation abroad which they never had at home. Had his conversation in the town been more general, he had certainly received other ideas on that subject, and not transmitted those names into his own country which will be forgotten by posterity in ours.

Thus I have contracted my thoughts on a large subject: for whatever has been said falls short of the true character of Monsieur St Evremond and his writings; and if the translation you are about to read does not everywhere come up to the original, the translator[3] desires you to believe that it is only because he has failed in his undertaking.

J. DRYDEN.

[1] 'A Discourse upon the *Great Alexander*' (1665), Racine's second tragedy.

[2] Probably Shadwell, whose comedy *Epsom Wells* (1673) had been praised by St Evremond.

[3] The translation was probably the work of at least four hands: Thomas Brown, James Drake, John Savage, and Francis Manning.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF ABINGDON, etc.

Prefixed to *Eleonora: a Panegyrical Poem Dedicated to the Memory of the late Countess of Abingdon* (1692)

DELAY IN INSPIRATION—A PANEGYRIC ON THE MODEL OF DONNE

Text: 4°, 1692.

Eleonora, wife of James Bertie, first Earl of Abingdon, had died on 31 May 1691, though Dryden's poem, written on her husband's commission to celebrate her memory, did not appear until early in the following year. The preface, evidently begun as an apology for the delay, contains a hint of Dryden's estimate of Donne, and a suggestion that his taste for satire had declined during his years in opposition.

My Lord,

The commands with which you honoured me some months ago are now performed. They had been sooner; but betwixt ill health, some business, and many troubles, I was forced to defer them till this time. Ovid, going to his banishment, and writing from on shipboard to his friends, excused the faults of his poetry by his misfortunes; and told them that good verses never flow but from a serene and composed spirit.[1] Wit, which is a kind of Mercury with wings fastened to his head and heels, can fly but slowly in a damp air. I therefore chose rather to obey you late than ill: if at least I am capable of writing anything, at any time, which is worthy your perusal and your patronage. I cannot say that I have escaped from a shipwreck; but have only gained a rock by hard swimming, where I may pant a while and gather breath: for the doctors gave me a sad assurance that my disease never took its leave of any man but with a purpose to return.

[1] *Tristia*, I.39f.

However, my Lord, I have laid hold on the interval, and managed the small stock which age has left me, to the best advantage, in performing this inconsiderable service to my Lady's memory. We, who are priests of Apollo, have not the inspiration when we please; but must wait till the god comes rushing on us, and invades us with a fury which we are not able to resist: which gives us double strength while the fit continues, and leaves us languishing and spent at its departure. Let me not seem to boast, my Lord; for I have already felt it on this occasion, and prophesied beyond my natural power. Let me add, and hope to be believed, that the excellency of the subject contributed much to the happiness of the execution, and that the weight of thirty years was taken off me while I was writing. I swom with the tide, and the water under me was buoyant. The reader will easily observe that I was transported by the multitude and variety of my similitudes, which are generally the product of a luxuriant fancy, and the wantonness of wit. Had I called in my judgment to my assistance, I had certainly retrenched many of them. But I defend them not; let them pass for beautiful faults amongst the better sort of critics: for the whole poem, though written in that which they call heroic verse, is of the Pindaric nature, as well in the thought as the expression and, as such, requires the same grains of allowance for it. It was intended, as your Lordship sees in the title, not for an elegy but a panegyric. A kind of apotheosis, indeed; if a heathen word may be applied to a Christian use. And on all occasions of praise, if we take the Ancients for our patterns, we are bound by prescription to employ the magnificence of words, and the force of figures, to adorn the sublimity of thoughts. Isocrates amongst the Grecian orators, and Cicero, and the younger Pliny amongst the Romans, have left us their precedents for our security: for I think I need not mention the inimitable Pindar, who stretches on these pinions out of sight, and is carried upward, as it were, into another world.

This at least, my Lord, I may justly plead, that if I have not performed so well as I think I have, yet I have used my best endeavours to excel myself. One disadvantage I have had, which is never to have known, or seen, my Lady: and to draw the lineaments of her mind from the description which I have received from others, is for a painter to set himself at work without the living original before him. Which, the more beautiful

it is, will be so much the more difficult for him to conceive; when he has only a relation given him of such and such features by an acquaintance or a friend, without the nice touches which give the best resemblance, and make the graces of the picture. Every artist is apt enough the flatter himself (and I amongst the rest) that their own ocular observations would have discovered more perfections, at least others, than have been delivered to them: though I have received mine from the best hands, that is, from persons who neither want a just understanding of my Lady's worth, nor a due veneration for her memory.

Doctor Donne, the greatest wit, though not the best poet of our nation, acknowledges that he had never seen Mrs Drury,[1] whom he has made immortal in his admirable Anniversaries; I have had the same fortune, though I have not succeeded to the same genius. However, I have followed his footsteps in the design of his panegyric, which was to raise an emulation in the living to copy out the example of the dead. And therefore it was that I once intended to have called this poem *The Pattern*: and though, on a second consideration, I changed the title into the name of that illustrious person, yet the design continues, and Eleonora is still the pattern of charity, devotion, and humility; of the best wife, the best mother, and the best of friends.

And now, my Lord, though I have endeavoured to answer your commands, yet I could not answer it to the world, nor to my conscience, if I gave not your Lordship my testimony of being the best husband now living: I say my testimony only, for the praise of it is given you by yourself. They who despise the rules of virtue, both in their practice and their morals, will think this a very trivial commendation. But I think it is the peculiar happiness of the Countess of Abingdon to have been so truly loved by you while she was living, and so gratefully honoured after she was dead. Few there are who either had, or could have, such a loss; and yet fewer who carried their love and constancy beyond the grave. The exteriors of mourning, a decent funeral,

[1] In a letter from Paris to George Gerrard, 14 April 1612: 'since I never saw the gentlewoman, I cannot be understood to have bound myself to have spoken just truths.' Of the two Anniversaries on the death of Elizabeth Drury, who had died in 1610 in her fifteenth year, *An Anatomie of the World* appeared in 1611, and *Of the Progress of the Soul* in the following year. Allusions to Donne were unusual in Restoration England, and his poems had not been reprinted since 1669.

and black habits, are the usual stints of common husbands: and perhaps their wives deserve no better than to be mourned with hypocrisy, and forgot with ease. But you have distinguished yourself from ordinary lovers by a real and lasting grief for the deceased. And by endeavouring to raise for her the most durable monument, which is that of verse. And so it would have proved if the workman had been equal to the work; and your choice of the artificer as happy as your design. Yet as Phidias, when he made the statue of Minerva, could not forbear to ingrave his own name as author of the piece;[1] so give me leave to hope that by subscribing mine to this poem, I may live by the goddess, and transmit my name to posterity by the memory of hers. 'Tis no flattery to assure your Lordship that she is remembered in the present age by all who have had the honour of her conversation and acquaintance. And that I have never been in any company since the news of her death was first brought me where they have not extolled her virtues; and even spoken the same things of her in prose which I have done in verse.

I therefore think myself obliged to thank your Lordship for the commission which you have given me: how I have acquitted myself of it must be left to the opinion of the world, in spite of any protestation which I can enter against the present age, as incompetent or corrupt judges. For my comfort, they are but Englishmen, and as such, if they think ill of me today, they are inconstant enough to think well of me tomorrow. And, after all, I have not much to thank my fortune that I was born amongst them. The good of both sexes are so few, in England, that they stand like exceptions against general rules: and though one of them has deserved a greater commendation than I could give her, they have taken care that I should not tire my pen with frequent exercise on the like subjects; that praises, like taxes, should be appropriated, and left almost as individual as the person. They say my talent is satire; if it be so, 'tis a fruitful age, and there is an extraordinary crop to gather. But a single hand is insufficient for such a harvest: they have sown the dragons' teeth themselves, and 'tis but just they should reap each other

[1] Plutarch, in his Life of Pericles, tells how Phidias inscribed his name on a statue of Pallas Athenae commissioned by Pericles during the building of the Propylaea.

in lampoons.[1] You, my Lord, who have the character of honour, though 'tis not my happiness to know you, may stand aside with the small remainders of the English nobility, truly such, and unhurt yourselves, behold the mad combat. If I have pleased you, and some few others, I have obtained my end. You see, I have disabled myself like an elected speaker of the House; yet like him I have undertaken the charge; and find the burden sufficiently recompensed by the honour. Be pleased to accept of these my unworthy labours, this paper monument; and let her pious memory, which I am sure is sacred to you, not only plead the pardon of my many faults, but gain me your protection, which is ambitiously sought by,

my Lord
your Lordship's
most obedient servant,
JOHN DRYDEN.

[1] A sly attack upon the politicians who had called in William of Orange in 1688. Dryden had prudently abandoned satire since the Glorious Revolution, his last satire being *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), in advocacy of Roman Catholicism.

THE CHARACTER OF POLYBIUS AND HIS WRITINGS

Prefixed to *The History of Polybius, Translated by Sir H. S.* (1693)

MIRACLES IN HISTORY—POLYBIUS AND TACITUS

Text: 8°, 1693.

Dryden's introduction to Sheers's translation of Polybius, the third English version of the Greek historian, is the least interesting of his three classical lives. It is largely hack-work, based notably upon Casaubon's commentaries, and its praise for Sheers's unscholarly translation is not convincing. Its importance lies in the fresh clues it offers to those already revealed in the Life of Plutarch, above, concerning Dryden's hitherto unsuspected reading among the ancient and modern historians.

THE worthy author[1] of this translation, who is very much my friend, was pleased to entrust it in my hands for many months together before he published it; desiring me to review the English, and to correct what I found amiss: which he needed not have done, if his modesty would have given him leave to have relied on his own abilities, who is so great a master of our style and language as the world will acknowledge him to be after the reading of this excellent version. 'Tis true that Polybius has formerly appeared in an English dress;[2] but under such a cloud of errors in his first translation that his native beauty was

[1] Sir Henry Sheers (d. 1713), a military engineer who had been diplomatically employed. He was knighted in about 1684, and was a friend of Samuel Pepys, who mentions him often in his diary. Apart from Polybius, he also translated some of the dialogues of Lucian in the 1711 collection which Dryden also introduced; cf. p. 209, below.

[2] In fact Sheers's version was the third in English. The first, an Elizabethan version by 'C.W.' (Christopher Watson), appeared in 1568. The second, which Dryden here condemns, was by Edward Grimeston and appeared in 1633.

not only hidden, but his sense perverted in many places: so that he appeared unlike himself, and unworthy of that esteem which has always been paid him by antiquity as the most sincere, the clearest, and most instructive of all historians. He is now not only redeemed from those mistakes, but also restored to the first purity of his conceptions.[1] And the style in which he now speaks is as plain and unaffected as that he wrote. I had only the pleasure of reading him in a fair manuscript, without the toil of alteration: at least it was so very inconsiderable that it only cost me the dash of a pen in some few places, and those of very small importance.

[There follow a series of compliments to Sheers with a list of his qualifications as a translator, and an account of the life and works of the Greek historian Polybius (*c.* 200 B.C.—*c.* 120 B.C.) which is avowedly based upon the commentaries of Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614), the Swiss Protestant editor and philologist who fled from Paris to London after the assassination of Henri IV in 1610. His text of the *Histories*, with a Latin translation and commentary, had been published in the previous year. The ensuing passages have been selected as being of critical interest from what is, essentially, a work of hack-biography.]

'Tis now time to enter into the particular praises of Polybius, which I have given you before in gross: and the first of them (following the method of Casaubon) is his wonderful skill in political affairs. I had read him in English with the pleasure of a boy before I was ten years of age; and yet even then had some dark notions of the prudence with which he conducted his design; particularly in making me know, and almost see, the places where such and such actions were performed. This was the first distinction which I was then capable of making betwixt him and other historians which I read early. But when, being of a riper age, I took him again into my hands, I must needs say that I have profited more by reading him than by Thucydides, Appian, Dion Cassius, and all the rest of the Greek historians together. And amongst all the Romans, none have reached him in this particular, but only Tacitus,[2] who is equal to him.

[1] Dryden is over-zealous in his praise of the translation, which is notoriously inaccurate. Indeed Sheers, at the beginning of the preface which follows Dryden's introductory essay, disavows any claim to scholarship.

[2] Five years later Dryden capped this praise of Tacitus with a share in the translation of *The Annals and History of Tacitus* (1698), to which he contributed Book I, vol. i.

[Polybius's love of truth is praised, including his refusal to change sides: 'he was not bought off to another party, but pursued the true interest of his country, even when he served the Romans'—no doubt a disguised reference to Dryden's pride in his own refusal to abandon Rome in favour of the new Protestant dynasty of William III after 1689.]

Another part of his veracity is also deserving the notice of the reader, tho' at the same time we must conclude that it was also an effect of a sound judgment: that he perpetually explodes the legends of prodigies and miracles, and instead of them most accurately searches into the natural causes of those actions which he describes; for from the first of these the latter follows of direct consequence. And for this reason he professes an immortal enmity to those tricks and jugglings which the common people believe as real miracles, because they are ignorant of the causes which produced them. But he had made a diligent search into them, and found out that they proceeded either from the fond credulity of the people, or were imposed on them by the craft of those whose interest it was that they should be believed. You hear not in Polybius that it rained blood, or stones; that a bull had spoken, or a thousand such impossibilities with which Livy perpetually crowds the calends of almost every consulship. His new years could no more begin without them, during his description of the Punic Wars, than our prognosticating almanacs without the effects of the present oppositions betwixt Saturn and Jupiter, the foretelling of comets and coruscations in the air, which seldom happen at the times assigned by our astrologers, and almost always fail in their events. If you will give credit to some other authors, some god was always present with Hannibal, or Scipio, to direct their actions; that a visible Deity wrought journey-work under Hannibal, to conduct him through the difficult passages of the Alps; and another did the same office of drudgery for Scipio, when he besieged new Carthage by draining the waters which otherwise would have drowned his army in their rash approaches. Which Polybius observing, says wittily and truly that the authors of such fabulous kind of stuff write tragedies, not histories.[1] For as the poets,

[1] 'It is not the business of an historian to affect the reader with recounting of prodigies, and relating things for the sake of the novelty and oddness of the matter, nor to wander after subjects that with difficulty may be allowed to have a resemblance of truth; nor to aggravate things: all of which is properly the poet's theme' (*The History of Polybius*, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 272, Book II).

when they are at a loss for the solution of a plot, bungle up their catastrophe with a god descending in a machine; so these inconsiderate historians, when they have brought their heroes into a plunge by some rash and headlong undertaking, having no human way remaining to disengage them with their honour, are forced to have recourse to miracle, and introduce a god for their deliverance. 'Tis a common frenzy of the ignorant multitude, says Casaubon, to be always engaging Heaven on their side: and indeed it is a successful strategem of any general to gain authority among his soldiers, if he can persuade them that he is the man by Fate appointed for such or such an action, though most impracticable. To be favoured of God, and command (if it may be permitted so to say) the extraordinary concourse of Providence, sets off a hero, and makes more specious the cause for which he fights, without any consideration of morality, which ought to be the beginning and end of all our actions. For where that is violated, God is only present in permission, and suffers a wrong to be done, but not commands it. Light historians, and such as are superstitious in their natures, by the artifice of feigned miracles, captivate the gross understandings of their readers, and please their fancies by relations of things which are rather wonderful than true.

[Dryden then dissents from Casaubon's view that Polybius cannot have been an atheist, and goes on to praise the discursive qualities of the *Histories*.]

Plato said of old that it would be happy for mankind if either philosophers administered the government, or that governors applied themselves to the study of philosophy.[1] I may also say that it would be happy for history if those who undertake to write it were men conversant in political affairs, who applied themselves seriously to their undertaking; not negligently, but as such who were fully persuaded that they undertook a work of the greatest moment, of the greatest excellency, and the most necessary for mankind; establishing this, as the foundation whereon they are to build, that they can never be capable of performing their duty, as they ought, unless they have formed themselves beforehand to their undertaking by prudence and long experience of affairs, without which endowments and

[1] *Republic*, V.471f.

advantages, if they attempt to write a history, they will fall into a various and endless labyrinth of errors.

When we hear this author speaking, we are ready to think ourselves engaged in a conversation with Cato the Censor, with Lelius, with Massinissa, and with the two Scipios, that is, with the greatest age in the Roman Commonwealth. This sets me so on fire when I am reading either here or in any ancient author, their lives and actions, that I cannot hold from breaking out with Montaigne into this expression: ''Tis just,' says he, 'for every honest man to be content with the government and laws of his native country, without endeavouring to alter or subvert them; but if I were to choose where I would have been born, it should have been in a commonwealth.'[1] He indeed names Venice, which for many reasons should not be my wish, but rather Rome in such an age, if it were possible, as that wherein Polybius lived; or that of Sparta, whose constitution for a republic is by our author compared with Rome, and to which he justly gives the preference.

I will not undertake to compare Polybius and Tacitus: tho' if I should attempt it, upon the whole merits of the cause, I must allow to Polybius the greater comprehension and the larger soul, to Tacitus the greater eloquence and the more close connection of his thoughts. The manner of Tacitus in writing is more like the force and gravity of Demosthenes; that of Polybius more like the copiousness and diffusive character of Cicero. Amongst historians, Tacitus imitated Thucydides, and Polybius Herodotus. Polybius foresaw the ruin of the Roman commonwealth by luxury, lust, and cruelty; Tacitus foresaw in the causes those events which should destroy the monarchy. They are both of them, without dispute, the best historians in their several kinds. In this they are alike, that both of them suffered under the

[1] Dryden, who is evidently quoting from memory, has confused two passages in the *Essais*, though he does not falsify Montaigne's meaning. In III.ix, Montaigne quotes a quatrain of Guy de Pibrac (1529-84):

> Ayme l'estat tel que tu le vois estre:
> S'il est royal, ayme la royauté;
> S'il est de peu, ou bien communauté,
> Ayme l'aussi, car Dieu t'y a faict naistre.

In a previous essay (I.18), writing of La Boétie (1530-63), who was born in Sarlat in south-west France, Montaigne had hinted at republican sympathies when he wrote: 'And know too that, if he could have chosen, he would rather have been born in Venice than at Sarlat.'

iniquity of the times in which they lived: both their histories are dismembered, the greatest part of them lost, and they are interpolated in many places. Had their works been perfect, we might have had longer histories, but not better. Casaubon, according to his usual partiality, condemns Tacitus that he may raise Polybius, who needs not any sinister artifice to make him appear equal to the best. Tacitus described the times of tyranny, but he always writes with some kind of indignation against them. 'Tis not his fault that Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Domitian were bad princes. He is accused of malevolence, and of taking actions in the worst sense: but we are still to remember that those were the actions of tyrants. Had the rest of his History remained to us, we had certainly found a better account of Vespasian, Titus, Nerva, and Trajan, who were virtuous emperors; and he would have given the principles of their actions a contrary turn. But it is not my business to defend Tacitus, neither dare I decide the preference betwixt him and our Polybius. They are equally profitable and instructive to the reader, but Tacitus more useful to those who are born under a monarchy; Polybius to those who live in a republic. What may farther be added concerning the history of this author, I leave to be performed by the elegant translator of his work.

JOHN DRYDEN.

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE ORIGINAL AND PROGRESS OF SATIRE

Prefixed to *The Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis, Translated into English Verse by Mr Dryden and Several Other Eminent Hands, Together with the Satires of Aulus Persius Flaccus* (1693)

DORSET AND DONNE AS SATIRISTS—EPIC MACHINES—HISTORY OF SATIRE—PERSIUS, HORACE, JUVENAL

Text: folio, 1693.

Dryden's verse translation of much of Juvenal and all of Persius was long in preparation. It must have been begun soon after the Revolution of 1689, but was delayed early in 1692 so that Dryden could add a version of Persius. The folio appeared in the autumn of 1692. Apart from the Persius, Dryden translated the first, third, tenth, and sixteenth satires of Juvenal, and selected the remaining translators, including Nahum Tate (II and XV), Congreve (XI), Thomas Creech (XIII), and his own sons Charles (VII) and John (XIV).

The preface is aptly dedicated to Charles, Earl of Dorset, the Eugenius who had put the case for the Moderns in the essay *Of Dramatic Poesy*, vol. I, pp. 32-42, above, and himself a satirist in verse. Its familiar title appears only on the title-page of the folio, and may be Tonson's description rather than Dryden's own title. In either event, it is a reasonably accurate description, for the Discourse is the first, and finer, of Dryden's two attempts to write at length the history of a literary form. It is better organized than the 1697 dedication to the *Aeneis*—an attempt to do for the epic what the Discourse does for satire—though still loose enough to admit, in its opening pages, an excessive eulogy of Dorset and a discussion of epic machinery. True, its historical core is fairly derivative, but much less so than the direct plagiarism from Segrais and others that occupies about one half of the *Aeneis* dedication of four years later. Dryden never wrote an epic, but he knows what it is to write a satire, and he is refreshingly eager to argue with the commentators. The discussion of the relative merits of Persius, Horace, and Juvenal that follows is a superb example of the comparative criticism in which he excelled, and reveals how his taste in satire had shifted from the urbane Horace to the fiercer Juvenal since the Revolution thrust him into lonely opposition. There is not enough on Dryden's own career as a political satirist

a dozen years before; but what there is, in the analogy between the satirist and Jack Ketch the executioner, is one of the finest moments in Dryden's prose—an account of the new ideal of English satire, belittling rather than abusive, which foreshadows the achievement of Pope.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES, EARL OF DORSET AND MIDDLESEX[1]

LORD CHAMBERLAIN OF THEIR MAJESTIES' HOUSEHOLD, KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER, ETC.

My Lord,

The wishes and desires of all good men, which have attended your Lordship from your first appearance in the world, are at length accomplished in your obtaining those honours and dignities which you have so long deserved.[2] There are no factions, tho' irreconcilable to one another, that are not united in their affection to you, and the respect they pay you. They are equally pleased in your prosperity, and would be equally concerned in your afflictions. Titus Vespasian was not more the delight of human kind.[3] The Universal Empire made him only more known, and more powerful, but could not make him more beloved. He had greater ability of doing good, but your inclination to it is not less; and tho' you could not extend your beneficence to so many persons, yet you have lost as few days as that excellent Emperor; and never had his complaint to make when you went to bed, that the sun had shone upon you in vain when you had the opportunity of relieving some unhappy man. This, my Lord, has justly acquired you as many friends as there are persons who have the honour to be known to you. Mere

[1] Cf. *Of Dramatic Poesy*, vol. I, p. 12n., above.

[2] Dorset had been appointed Lord Chamberlain to William and Mary in 1689.

[3] From Suetonius, who calls Vespasian 'amor ac deliciae generis humani,' a phrase Dryden had already echoed, in his praise of Charles II as 'mankind's delight' in *Absalom and Achitophel*, I.318.

acquaintance you have none; you have drawn them all into a nearer line; and they who have conversed with you are for ever after inviolably yours. This is a truth so generally acknowledged that it needs no proof: 'tis of the nature of a first principle, which is received as soon as it is proposed; and needs not the reformation which Descartes used to his;[1] for we doubt not, neither can we properly say, we think we admire and love you above all other men. There is a certainty in the proposition, and we know it. With the same assurance I can say, you neither have enemies, nor can scarce have any; for they who have never heard of you, can neither love or hate you; and they who have can have no other notion of you than that which they receive from the public, that you are the best of men. After this, my testimony can be of no farther use than to declare it to be daylight at high noon; and all who have the benefit of sight can look up as well, and see the sun.

'Tis true, I have one privilege which is almost particular to myself, that I saw you in the east at your first arising above the hemisphere: I was as soon as sensible as any man of that light, when it was but just shooting out, and beginning to travel upwards to the meridian. I made my early addresses to your Lordship in my *Essay of Dramatic Poetry*;[2] and therein bespoke you to the world, wherein I have the right of a first discoverer. When I was myself, in the rudiments of my poetry, without name or reputation in the world, having rather the ambition of a writer than the skill; when I was drawing the outlines of an art without any living master to instruct me in it; an art which had been better praised than studied here in England, wherein Shakespeare, who created the stage among us, had rather written happily, than knowingly and justly, and Jonson, who by studying Horace had been acquainted with the rules, yet seemed to envy to posterity that knowledge and, like an inventor of some useful art, to make a monopoly of his learning;[3] when thus, as I may say, before the use of the loadstone, or knowledge of the compass, I was sailing in a vast ocean, without other help than

[1] 'I think,' as in his *Discours de la méthode* (1637), IV.ii: 'Je pense, donc je suis.'

[2] In the dedication to Dorset, vol. I, pp. 12-16, above. A third edition of the Essay appeared in 1693.

[3] Jonson's criticism is largely confined to notes published after his death as *Timber* (1640). His conversations with Drummond did not appear until 1833.

the pole-star of the Ancients, and the rules of the French stage amongst the Moderns, which are extremely different from ours, by reason of their opposite taste; yet even then I had the presumption to dedicate to your Lordship: a very unfinished piece, I must confess, and which only can be excused by the little experience of the author, and the modesty of the title *An Essay*. Yet I was stronger in prophecy than I was in criticism; I was inspired to foretell you to mankind, as the restorer of poetry, the greatest genius, the truest judge, and the best patron.

Good sense and good nature are never separated, tho' the ignorant world has thought otherwise. Good nature, by which I mean beneficence and candour,[1] is the product of right reason; which of necessity will give allowance to the failings of others, by considering that there is nothing perfect in mankind; and by distinguishing that which comes nearest to excellency, tho' not absolutely free from faults, will certainly produce a candour in the judge. 'Tis incident to an elevated understanding, like your Lordship's, to find out the errors of other men: but 'tis your prerogative to pardon them; to look with pleasure on those things which are somewhat congenial, and of a remote kindred to your own conceptions;[2] and to forgive the many failings of those who, with their wretched art, cannot arrive to those heights that you possess, from a happy, abundant, and native genius; which are as inborn to you as they were to Shakespeare; and, for aught I know, to Homer; in either of whom we find all arts and sciences, all moral and natural philosophy, without knowing that they ever studied them.

There is not an English writer this day living who is not perfectly convinced that your Lordship excels all others in all the several parts of poetry which you have undertaken to adorn.[3] The most vain, and the most ambitious of our age, have not[4]

[1] Cf. dedication to *Of Dramatic Poesy*, vol. I, p. 15n., above.

[2] I.e. to things both sympathetic and unsympathetic.

[3] Apart from the tragedy from Corneille, *Pompey the Great* (1664), in which Dorset probably had a hand, nothing of his had so far appeared in print. His occasional poems, which consist of short songs and satires, were published after his death in *The Works of the Earls of Rochester, Roscommon, Dorset* (1714). Johnson, in his Life of Dorset, is justly scornful of Dryden's eulogy: 'Would it be imagined that . . . all the satires were little personal invectives, and that his longest composition was a song of eleven stanzas?'

[4] Herodotus, VIII.123, where each candidate votes first for himself, and only second for Themistocles.

dared to assume so much as the competitors of Themistocles: they have yielded the first place without dispute; and have been arrogantly content to be esteemed as second to your Lordship; and even that also, with a *longo, sed proximi intervallo.*[1] If there have been, or are, any who go farther in their self-conceit, they must be very singular in their opinion: they must be like the officer in a play, who was called Captain, Lieutenant, and Company. The world will easily conclude whether such unattended generals can ever be capable of making a revolution in Parnassus.

I will not attempt, in this place, to say any thing particular of your lyric poems, though they are the delight and wonder of this age, and will be the envy of the next. The subject of this book confines me to satire; and in that, an author of your own quality (whose ashes I will not disturb) has given you all the commendation which his self-sufficiency could afford to any man: *The best good man, with the worst-natur'd Muse.*[2] In that character, methinks I am reading Jonson's verses to the memory of Shakespeare:[3] an insolent, sparing, and invidious panegyric: where good nature, the most god-like commendation of a man, is only attributed to your person, and denied to your writings; for they are everywhere so full of candour that, like Horace, you only expose the follies of men, without arraigning their vices; and in this excel him, that you add that pointedness of thought which is visibly wanting in our great Roman. There is more of salt in all your verses than I have seen in any of the Moderns, or even of the Ancients; but you have been sparing of the gall, by which means you have pleased all readers, and offended none. Donne alone, of all our countrymen, had your talent; but was not happy enough to arrive at your versification; and were he translated into numbers, and English, he would yet be wanting in the dignity of expression. That which is the prime virtue, and chief ornament of Virgil, which distinguishes him from the rest of writers, is so conspicuous in your verses,

[1] *Aeneid*, V.320: 'but next by a long interval.'

[2] Rochester, 'An Allusion to Horace, the 10th Satire of the 1st Book,' ll. 59-60:

> For pointed satires I would Buckhurst choose,
> The best good man, with the worst natur'd Muse.

The 'Allusion' is an attack on Dryden. Rochester had died in 1680.

[3] Prefixed to the first folio (1623).

that it casts a shadow on all your contemporaries; we cannot be seen, or but obscurely, while you are present. You equal Donne in the variety, multiplicity, and choice of thoughts; you excel him in the manner and the words. I read you both with the same admiration, but not with the same delight. He affects the metaphysics,[1] not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softnesses of love. In this (if I may be pardoned for so bold a truth) Mr Cowley has copied him to a fault; so great a one, in my opinion, that it throws his *Mistress* infinitely below his Pindarics and his latter compositions, which are undoubtedly the best of his poems, and the most correct. For my own part, I must avow it freely to the world that I never attempted anything in satire wherein I have not studied your writings as the most perfect model. I have continually laid them before me; and the greatest commendation which my own partiality can give to my productions is that they are copies, and no farther to be allowed than as they have something more or less of the original. Some few touches of your Lordship, some secret graces which I have endeavoured to express after your manner, have made whole poems of mine to pass with approbation; but take your verses altogether, and they are inimitable. If therefore I have not written better, 'tis because you have not written more. You have not set me sufficient copy to transcribe; and I cannot add one letter of my own invention, of which I have not the example there.

'Tis a general complaint against your Lordship, and I must have leave to upbraid you with it, that, because you need not write, you will not. Mankind, that wishes you so well in all things that relate to your prosperity, have their intervals of wishing for themselves, and are within a little of grudging

[1] Johnson, in his Life of Cowley, is the first critic to dub the School of Donne 'the metaphysical poets': 'About the beginning of the seventeenth century appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets. . . . The metaphysical poets were men of learning, and to show their learning was their whole endeavour.' He is probably echoing Dryden's phrase: indeed he refers to this passage, not very accurately, two paragraphs later: 'Those, however, who deny them to be poets, allow them to be wits. Dryden confesses of himself and his contemporaries that they fall below Donne in wit, but maintains that they surpass him in poetry.'

you the fulness of your fortune; they would be more malicious if you used it not so well, and with so much generosity.

Fame is in itself a real good, if we may believe Cicero,[1] who was perhaps too fond of it. But even fame, as Virgil tells us, acquires strength by going forward. Let Epicurus give indolency as an attribute to his gods, and place in it the happiness of the blest; the Divinity which we worship has given us not only a precept against it, but his own example to the contrary. The world, my Lord, would be content to allow you a seventh day for rest; or if you thought that hard upon you, we would not refuse you half your time: if you came out, like some great monarch, to take a town but once a year, as it were for your diversion, though you had no need to extend your territories. In short, if you were a bad, or which is worse, an indifferent poet, we would thank you for our own quiet, and not expose you to the want of yours. But when you are so great and so successful, and when we have that necessity of your writing that we cannot subsist in poetry without it; any more (I may almost say) than the world without the daily course of ordinary providence, methinks this argument might prevail with you, my Lord, to forego a little of your repose for the public benefit. 'Tis not that you are under any force of working daily miracles, to prove your being; but now and then somewhat of extraordinary, that is, any thing of your production, is requisite to refresh your character.

This, I think, my Lord, is a sufficient reproach to you; and should I carry it as far as mankind would authorise me, would be little less than satire. And, indeed, a provocation is almost necessary, in behalf of the world, that you might be induced sometimes to write; and in relation to a multitude of scribblers, who daily pester the world with their insufferable stuff, that they might be discouraged from writing any more. I complain not of their lampoons and libels, though I have been the public mark for many years. I am vindictive enough to have repelled force by force, if I could imagine that any of them had ever reached me; but they either shot at rovers,[2] and therefore missed, or their powder was so weak that I might safely stand them at the nearest distance. I answered not *The Rehearsal*,

[1] *Tusculan Disputations*, V.16.
[2] I.e. into the air, as in archery, to hit a distant target.

because I knew the author[1] sat to himself when he drew the picture, and was the very Bayes of his own farce; because also I knew that my betters[2] were more concerned than I was in that satire; and, lastly, because Mr Smith and Mr Johnson,[3] the main pillars of it, were two such languishing gentlemen in their conversation that I could liken them to nothing but to their own relations, those noble characters of men of wit and pleasure about the town. The like considerations have hindered me from dealing with the lamentable companions of their prose and doggerel. I am so far from defending my poetry against them that I will not so much as expose theirs. And for my morals, if they are not proof against their attacks, let me be thought by posterity what those authors would be thought, if any memory of them, or of their writings, could endure so long as to another age. But these dull makers of lampoons, as harmless as they have been to me, are yet of dangerous example to the public. Some witty men may perhaps succeed to their designs and, mixing sense with malice, blast the reputation of the most innocent amongst men, and the most virtuous amongst women.

Heaven be praised, our common libellers are as free from the imputation of wit as of morality; and therefore whatever mischief they have designed, they have performed but little of it. Yet these ill writers, in all justice, ought themselves to be exposed: as Persius has given us a fair example in his first satire, which is levelled particularly at them; and none is so fit to correct their faults as he who is not only clear from any in his own writings, but is also so just that he will never defame the good; and is armed with the power of verse, to punish and make examples of the bad. But of this I shall have occasion to speak further, when I come to give the definition and character of true satires.

In the mean time, as a counsellor bred up in the knowledge of the municipal and statute laws may honestly inform a just prince how far his prerogative extends; so I may be allowed to tell your Lordship, who by an undisputed title are the king of

[1] The second Duke of Buckingham, part-author of *The Rehearsal* (1672), though Samuel Butler, Martin Clifford, and Thomas Sprat may also have been implicated. But Dryden did answer—in the portrait of Zimri in *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), ll. 544f.

[2] It is said that the play was first designed as an attack upon Davenant, and diverted to ridiculing Dryden after Davenant's death in 1668.

[3] Smith is the country gentleman, Johnson the town wit, in *The Rehearsal*.

poets, what an extent of power you have, and how lawfully you may exercise it, over the petulant scribblers of this age. As Lord Chamberlain, I know, you are absolute by your office, in all that belongs to the decency and good manners of the stage. You can banish from thence scurrility and profaneness, and restrain the licentious insolence of poets, and their actors, in all things that shock the public quiet, or the reputation of private persons, under the notion of humour. But I mean not the authority which is annexed to your office: I speak of that only which is inborn and inherent to your person; what is produced in you by an excellent wit, a masterly and commanding genius over all writers, whereby you are empowered, when you please, to give the final decision of wit; to put your stamp on all that ought to pass for current; and set a brand of reprobation on clipped poetry, and false coin. A shilling dipped in the bath[1] may go for gold amongst the ignorant, but the sceptres on the guineas shew the difference. That your Lordship is formed by nature for this supremacy, I could easily prove (were it not already granted by the world) from the distinguishing character of your writing; which is so visible to me that I never could be imposed on to receive for yours what was written by any others; or to mistake your genuine poetry for their spurious productions. I can farther add with truth (though not without some vanity in saying it) that in the same paper, written by divers hands, whereof your Lordship's was only part, I could separate your gold from their copper; and though I could not give back to every author his own brass (for there is not the same rule for distinguishing betwixt bad and bad, as betwixt ill and excellently good) yet I never failed of knowing what was yours, and what was not; and was absolutely certain that this, or the other part, was positively yours, and could not possibly be written by any other.

True it is that some bad poems, though not all, carry their owners' marks about 'em. There is some peculiar awkwardness, false grammar, imperfect sense, or at the least obscurity; some brand or other on this buttock, or that ear, that 'tis notorious who are the owners of the cattle, though they should not sign it

[1] A chemist's bath, for gilding. Some issues of shillings and guineas during the reign of Charles II bore similar designs of four shields on the reverse side. Cf. *The Medal* (1682), ll. 228-9.

with their names. But your Lordship, on the contrary, is distinguished not only by the excellency of your thoughts, but by your style and manner of expressing them. A painter, judging of some admirable piece, may affirm with certainty that it was of Holbein, or Van Dyck; but vulgar designs, and common draughts, are easily mistaken, and misapplied. Thus, by my long study of your Lordship, I am arrived at the knowledge of your particular manner. In the good poems of other men, like those artists, I can only say, This is like the draught of such a one, or like the colouring of another. In short, I can only be sure that 'tis the hand of a good master; but in your performances, 'tis scarcely possible for me to be deceived. If you write in your strength, you stand revealed at the first view; and should you write under it, you cannot avoid some peculiar graces which only cost me a second consideration to discover you: for I may say it, with all the severity of truth, that every line of yours is precious. Your Lordship's only fault is that you have not written more; unless I could add another, and that yet greater, but I fear for the public the accusation would not be true, that you have written, and out of a vicious modesty will not publish.

Virgil has confined his works within the compass of eighteen thousand lines, and has not treated many subjects; yet he ever had, and ever will have, the reputation of the best poet. Martial says of him that he could have excelled Varius in tragedy, and Horace in lyric poetry, but out of deference to his friends he attempted neither.[1]

The same prevalence of genius is in your Lordship, but the world cannot pardon your concealing it on the same consideration; because we have neither a living Varius, nor a Horace in whose excellencies, both of poems, odes, and satires, you had equalled them, if our language had not yielded to the Roman majesty, and length of time had not added a reverence to the works of Horace. For good sense is the same in all or most ages; and course of time rather improves nature than impairs her. What has been, may be again: another Homer, and another Virgil, may possibly arise from those very causes which produced the first; though it would be impudence to affirm that any such have yet appeared.

[1] Martial, VIII.xviii, 5-8.

'Tis manifest that some particular ages have been more happy than others in the production of great men, in all sorts of arts and sciences: as that of Euripides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, and the rest for stage-poetry amongst the Greeks; that of Augustus, for heroic, lyric, dramatic, elegiac, and indeed all sorts of poetry, in the persons of Virgil, Horace, Varius, Ovid, and many others; especially if we take into that century the latter end of the Commonwealth,[1] wherein we find Varro, Lucretius, and Catullus; and at the same time lived Cicero, Sallust, and Cæsar. A famous age in modern times for learning in every kind was that of Lorenzo de Medici, and his son Leo the Tenth; wherein painting was revived, and poetry flourished, and the Greek language was restored.

Examples in all these are obvious. But what I would infer is this: that in such an age 'tis possible some great genius may arise to equal any of the Ancients; abating only for the language. For great contemporaries whet and cultivate each other; and mutual borrowing, and commerce, makes the common riches of learning, as it does of the civil government.

But suppose that Homer and Virgil were the only of their species, and that nature was so much worn out in producing them that she is never able to bear the like again; yet the example only holds in heroic poetry: in tragedy and satire, I offer myself to maintain against some of our modern critics that this age and the last, particularly in England, have excelled the Ancients in both those kinds; and I would instance in Shakespeare of the former, of your Lordship in the latter sort.

Thus I might safely confine myself to my native country. But if I would only cross the seas, I might find in France a living Horace and a Juvenal, in the person of the admirable Boileau; whose numbers are excellent, whose expressions are noble, whose thoughts are just, whose language is pure, whose satire is pointed, and whose sense is close; what he borrows from the Ancients, he repays with usury of his own, in coin as good, and almost as universally valuable: for setting prejudice and partiality apart, though he is our enemy, the stamp of a Louis, the patron of all arts, is not much inferior to the medal of an Augustus Cæsar. Let this be said without entering into the interests of

[1] I.e. the Roman Republic, finally destroyed by Augustus Caesar after the battle of Actium in 31 B.C.

factions and parties, and relating only to the bounty of that king to men of learning and merit; a praise so just, that even we who are his enemies cannot refuse it to him.

Now if it may be permitted me to go back again to the consideration of epic poetry, I have confessed that no man hitherto has reached, or so much as approached, to the excellencies of Homer or of Virgil; I must farther add that Statius, the best versificator next to Virgil, knew not how to design after him, though he had the model in his eye; that Lucan is wanting both in design and subject, and is besides too full of heat and affectation; that amongst the Moderns, Ariosto neither designed justly, nor observed any unity of action, or compass of time, or moderation in the vastness of his draught; his style is luxurious, without majesty or decency, and his adventures without the compass of nature and possibility. Tasso, whose design was regular, and who observed the rules of unity in time and place more closely than Virgil, yet was not so happy in his action; he confesses himself to have been too lyrical,[1] that is, to have written beneath the dignity of heroic verse, in his episodes of Sophronia, Erminia, and Armida; his story is not so pleasing as Ariosto's; he is too flatulent sometimes, and sometimes too dry; many times unequal, and almost always forced; and besides, is full of conceits, points of epigram, and witticisms; all which are not only below the dignity of heroic verse, but contrary to its nature: Virgil and Homer have not one of them. And those who are guilty of so boyish an ambition in so grave a subject are so far from being considered as heroic poets that they ought to be turned down from Homer to the *Anthologia*, from Virgil to Martial and Owen's Epigrams,[2] and from Spenser to Flecknoe;[3] that is, from the top to the bottom of all poetry. But to return to Tasso, he borrows from the invention of Boiardo, and in his alteration of his poem, which is infinitely for the worse, imitates Homer so very servilely that (for example) he gives the King of Jerusalem fifty sons, only because Homer had bestowed the like number on King Priam; he kills the youngest in the same manner, and has

[1] Letter to Scipione Gonzaga (3 April 1576); the passage is referred to by Segrais in his preface to his *Enéide* (1668), p. 47.

[2] John Owen (*c.* 1560-1622), whose eleven books of Latin epigrams appeared between 1606 and 1613.

[3] Richard Flecknoe (d. 1678?), the dramatist and poetaster who had been a butt of Dryden's wit in *Mac Flecknoe* (1682).

provided his hero with a Patroclus under another name,[1] only to bring him back to the wars, when his friend was killed. The French have performed nothing in this kind which is not far below those two Italians, and subject to a thousand more reflections, without examining their *Saint Lewis*, their *Pucelle*, or their *Alaric*.[2] The English have only to boast of Spenser and Milton, who neither of them wanted either genius or learning to have been perfect poets; and yet both of them are liable to many censures. For there is no uniformity in the design of Spenser: he aims at the accomplishment of no one action; he raises up a hero for every one of his adventures; and endows each of them with some particular moral virtue, which renders them all equal, without subordination or preference. Every one is most valiant in his own legend: only we must do him that justice to observe that magnanimity, which is the character of Prince Arthur,[3] shines throughout the whole poem; and succours the rest, when they are in distress. The original of every knight was then living in the court of Queen Elizabeth; and he attributed to each of them that virtue which he thought was most conspicuous in them: an ingenious piece of flattery, tho' it turned not much to his account. Had he lived to finish his poem, in the six remaining legends, it had certainly been more of a piece; but could not have been perfect, because the model was not true. But Prince Arthur, or his chief patron Sir Philip Sidney, whom he intended to make happy by the marriage of his Gloriana, dying before him, deprived the poet both of means and spirit to accomplish his design: for the rest, his obsolete language, and the ill choice of his stanza, are faults but of the second magnitude; for notwithstanding the first, he is still intelligible, at least after a little practice; and for the last, he is the more to be admired,

[1] Perhaps Eustazio (*Gerusalemme liberata*, V.12-13) who is, however, jealous of the hero Rinaldo.

[2] Pierre Le Moyne, *Saint Louis* (1653); Jean Chapelain, *La pucelle* (1656); Georges de Scudéry, *Alaric* (1654): three long French epics which Dryden happily confesses not to have read.

[3] Spenser, 'A Letter to Sir Walter Ralegh' prefixed to *The Faerie Queene* (1590): 'So in the person of Prince Arthur I set forth magnificence in particular, which virtue for that . . . it is the perfection of all the rest.' There is no substance for the historical analogies that follow: Dryden may have been misled by the word 'patron' in the same Letter to suppose that 'the original of every knight was then living.' But all we know is what Spenser tells us, which is little enough: 'But of the xii other virtues, I make xii other knights the patrons, for the more variety of the history.'

that labouring under such a difficulty, his verses are so numerous, so various, and so harmonious, that only Virgil, whom he professtly imitated, has surpassed him among the Romans; and only Mr Waller among the English.

As for Mr Milton, whom we all admire with so much justice, his subject is not that of an heroic poem, properly so called. His design is the losing of our happiness; his event is not prosperous, like that of all other epic works;[1] his heavenly machines are many, and his human persons are but two. But I will not take Mr Rymer's work out of his hands. He has promised the world a critique on that author;[2] wherein, tho' he will not allow his poem for heroic, I hope he will grant us that his thoughts are elevated, his words sounding, and that no man has so happily copied the manner of Homer; or so copiously translated his Grecisms, and the Latin elegancies of Virgil. 'Tis true, he runs into a flat of thought, sometimes for a hundred lines together, but 'tis when he is got into a track of Scripture. His antiquated words were his choice, not his necessity; for therein he imitated Spenser, as Spenser did Chaucer. And tho', perhaps, the love of their masters may have transported both too far, in the frequent use of them; yet in my opinion, obsolete words may then be laudably revived, when either they are more sounding, or more significant than those in practice; and when their obscurity is taken away, by joining other words to them which clear the sense; according to the rule of Horace,[3] for the admission of new words. But in both cases a moderation is to be observed in the use of them: for unnecessary coinage, as well as unnecessary revival, runs into affectation; a fault to be avoided on either hand. Neither will I justify Milton for his blank verse, tho' I may excuse him by the example of Hannibal Caro,[4] and other Italians, who have used it; for whatever causes he alleges for the abolishing of rhyme[5] (which I have not now the leisure to

[1] This seems to leave the *Iliad* out of account—often a troublesome exception for neoclassical critics. Cf. p. 185, below.

[2] At the end of *The Tragedies of the Last Age* (1678): 'I shall also send you some reflections on that *Paradise Lost* of Milton's, which some are pleased to call a poem; and assert rhyme against the slender sophistry wherewith he attacks it' (*Critical Works*, ed. Zimansky, p. 76).

[3] *Ars poetica*, ll. 47-8.

[4] Cf. preface to *Sylvæ*, p. 22n., above.

[5] In Milton's note prefixed to *Paradise Lost*, 'The Verse': 'The measure is English heroic verse without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek and Virgil

examine), his own particular reason is plainly this, that rhyme was not his talent; he had neither the ease of doing it, nor the graces of it; which is manifest in his juvenilia, or verses written in his youth, where his rhyme is always constrained and forced, and comes hardly from him, at an age when the soul is most pliant, and the passion of love makes almost every man a rhymer, tho' not a poet.

By this time, my Lord, I doubt not but that you wonder why I have run off from my bias[1] so long together, and made so tedious a digression from satire to heroic poetry. But if you will not excuse it by the tattling quality of age which, as Sir William Davenant says, is always narrative,[2] yet I hope the usefulness of what I have to say on this subject will qualify the remoteness of it; and this is the last time I will commit the crime of prefaces; or trouble the world with my notions of any thing that relates to verse.[3] I have then, as you see, observed the failings of many great wits amongst the Moderns, who have attempted to write an epic poem. Besides these, or the like animadversions of them by other men, there is yet a farther reason given why they cannot possibly succeed so well as the Ancients, even tho' we could allow them not to be inferior, either in genius or learning, or the tongue in which they write; or all those other wonderful qualifications which are necessary to the forming of a true accomplished heroic poet. The fault is laid on our religion: they say that Christianity is not capable of those embellishments which are afforded in the belief of those ancient heathens.

And 'tis true that, in the severe notions of our faith, the fortitude of a Christian consists in patience, and suffering for the love of God, whatever hardships can befall him in the world; not in any great attempt, or in performance of those enterprises

in Latin; rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age to set off wretched matter and lame metre. . . .'

[1] Cf. preface to *Examen poeticum*, p. 166n., below.

[2] I.e. anecdotal. There is no obvious source in Davenant, though in his preface to *Gondibert* (1650) he tells us that the wit of old men lies in punning and in telling stories: 'in a kind of an alike tinkling of words; or else in a grave telling of wonderful things. . . .'

[3] In fact Dryden lived to write at least four more literary prefaces: the 'Parallel' (1695), the Life of Lucian (written *c.* 1696), the vast preface to the 1697 *Aeneis*, and the preface to the *Fables* (1700).

which the poets call heroic, and which are commonly the effects of interest, ostentation, pride, and worldly honour; that humility and resignation are our prime virtues; and that these include no action but that of the soul: when as, on the contrary, an heroic poem requires to its necessary design, and as its last perfection, some great action of war, the accomplishment of some extraordinary undertaking, which requires the strength and vigour of the body, the duty of a soldier, the capacity and prudence of a general and, in short, as much, or more, of the active virtue than the suffering. But to this the answer is very obvious. God has placed us in our several stations; the virtues of a private Christian are patience, obedience, submission, and the like; but those of a magistrate, or general, or a king, are prudence, counsel, active fortitude, coercive power, awful command, and the exercise of magnanimity, as well as justice. So that this objection hinders not but that an epic poem, or the heroic action of some great commander, enterprised for the common good, and honour of the Christian cause, and executed happily, may be as well written now as it was of old by the heathens, provided the poet be endued with the same talents; and the language, though not of equal dignity, yet as near approaching to it as our modern barbarism will allow, which is all that can be expected from our own, or any other now extant, though more refined; and therefore we are to rest contented with that only inferiority which is not possibly to be remedied.

I wish I could as easily remove that other difficulty which yet remains. 'Tis objected by a great French critic, as well as an admirable poet, yet living, and whom I have mentioned with that honour which his merit exacts from me, I mean Boileau, that the machines of our Christian religion, in heroic poetry, are much more feeble to support that weight than those of heathenism.[1] Their doctrine, grounded as it was on ridiculous

[1] *L'art poétique* (1674), III.199-200:

De la foi d'un chrétien les mystères terribles
D'ornements égayés ne sont point susceptibles.

Dryden's enthusiasm for pagan machines had faded since his defence of 'those enthusiastic parts of poetry' in 1672 (vol. I, p. 160, above); cf. letter to Dennis, p. 178, below. In a note to the fourth Georgic, l. 660, in the 1697 Virgil, he praises Virgil for his sparing, and purely ornamental, use of machines.

fables, was yet the belief of the two victorious monarchies,[1] the Grecian and Roman. Their gods did not only interest themselves in the event of wars (which is the effect of a superior providence) but also espoused the several parties in a visible corporeal descent, managed their intrigues, and fought their battles sometimes in opposition to each other: tho' Virgil (more discreet than Homer in that last particular) has contented himself with the partiality of his deities, their favours, their counsels or commands, to those whose cause they had espoused, without bringing them to the outrageousness of blows. Now, our religion (says he) is deprived of the greatest part of those machines; at least the most shining in epic poetry. Tho' St Michael in Ariosto seeks out Discord, to send her amongst the Pagans, and finds her in a convent of friars, where peace should reign,[2] which indeed is fine satire; and Satan, in Tasso, excites Solyman to an attempt by night on the Christian camp, and brings an host of devils to his assistance;[3] yet the archangel, in the former example, when Discord was restive, and would not be drawn from her beloved monastery with fair words, has the whip-hand of her, drags her out with many stripes, sets her, on God's name, about her business, and makes her know the difference of strength betwixt a nuncio of Heaven and a minister of Hell. The same angel, in the latter instance from Tasso (as if God had never another messenger belonging to the Court, but was confined like Jupiter to Mercury, and Juno to Iris), when he sees his time, that is, when half of the Christians are already killed, and all the rest are in a fair way to be routed, stickles[4] betwixt the remainders of God's host, and the race of fiends; pulls the devils backward by the tails, and drives them from the quarry; or otherwise the whole business had miscarried, and Jerusalem remained untaken. This, says Boileau, is a very unequal match for the poor devils, who are sure to come by the worst of it in the combat; for nothing is more easy than for an Almighty Power to bring his old rebels to reason when he pleases. Consequently, what pleasure, what entertainment, can be raised from so pitiful a machine?

[1] The four great monarchies were supposed those of Assyria, Persia Greece, and Rome, to be succeeded by the monarchy of Christ. Cf. Augustine, *De civitate dei*, xx.23.

[2] *Orlando furioso*, xiv.75f. The passage is referred to again in his note to *Georgics*, IV.660, in the 1697 Virgil, where Dryden calls it 'the only beautiful machine which I remember in the modern poets.'

[3] *Gerusalemme liberata*, IX.

[4] I.e. acts as a mediator or umpire.

where we see the success of the battle from the very beginning of it? unless that, as we are Christians, we are glad that we have gotten God on our side, to maul our enemies, when we cannot do the work ourselves? For if the poet had given the faithful more courage, which had cost him nothing, or at least have made them exceed the Turks in number, he might have gained the victory for us Christians, without interessing Heaven in the quarrel; and that with as much ease, and as little credit to the conqueror, as when a party of a hundred soldiers defeats another which consists only of fifty.

This, my Lord, I confess, is such an argument against our modern poetry as cannot be answered by those mediums which have been used. We cannot hitherto boast that our religion has furnished us with any such machines as have made the strength and beauty of the ancient buildings.

But what if I venture to advance an invention of my own, to supply the manifest defect of our new writers? I am sufficiently sensible of my weakness; and 'tis not very probable that I should succeed in such a project, whereof I have not had the least hint from any of my predecessors, the poets, or any of their seconds and coadjutors, the critics. Yet we see the art of war is improved in sieges, and new instruments of death are invented daily. Something new in philosophy and the mechanics is discovered almost every year; and the science of former ages is improved by the succeeding. I will not detain you with a long preamble to that which better judges will, perhaps, conclude to be little worth.

'Tis this, in short; that Christian poets have not hitherto been acquainted with their own strength. If they had searched the Old Testament as they ought, they might there have found the machines which are proper for their work; and those more certain in their effect than it may be the New Testament is in the rules sufficient for salvation. The perusing of one chapter in the prophecy of Daniel,[1] and accommodating what there they find with the principles of Platonic philosophy as it is now Christianised,[2] would have made the ministry of angels as strong

[1] Daniel 10.10f.

[2] By the Cambridge Platonists; cf. Henry More (1614-87), *Philosophical Works* (1662) and *Exposition of the Prophecies of Daniel* (1681), especially his introduction. According to the new and Christianized Platonism, paganism was not utterly diabolical or superstitious: some of its gods may be fallen

an engine for the working up heroic poetry, in our religion, as that of the Ancients has been to raise theirs by all the fables of their gods, which were only received for truths by the most ignorant and weakest of the people.

'Tis a doctrine almost universally received by Christians, as well Protestants as Catholics, that there are guardian angels appointed by God Almighty as his vicegerents, for the protection and government of cities, provinces, kingdoms, and monarchies; and those as well of heathens, as of true believers. All this is so plainly proved from those texts of Daniel that it admits of no farther controversy. The Prince of the Persians, and that other of the Grecians, are granted to be the guardians and protecting ministers of those empires. It cannot be denied that they were opposite, and resisted one another. St Michael is mentioned by his name as the patron of the Jews, and is now taken by the Christians as the protector-general of our religion. These tutelar genii, who presided over the several people and regions committed to their charge, were watchful over them for good, as far as their commissions could possibly extend. The general purpose and design of all was certainly the service of their Great Creator. But 'tis an undoubted truth that, for ends best known to the Almighty Majesty of Heaven, his providential designs for the benefit of his creatures, for the debasing and punishing of some nations, and the exaltation and temporal reward of others, were not wholly known to these his ministers; else why those factious quarrels, controversies, and battles amongst themselves, when they were all united in the same design, the service and honour of their common master? But being instructed only in the general, and zealous of the main design; and as finite beings, not admitted into the secrets of government, the last resorts of providence, or capable of discovering the final purposes of God, who can work good out of evil as he pleases, and irresistibly sways all manner of events on earth, directing them finally for the best, to his creation in general, and to the ultimate end of his own glory in particular; they must, of necessity, be sometimes ignorant of the means conducing to those ends, in which alone they can jar and oppose each other. One angel, as we may suppose the Prince

angels, and some of its myths may be true. Dryden had studied at Cambridge at a time when such doctrines were in vogue, but he nowhere shows much sign of having examined them carefully, and his programme for a new system of epic machinery based on Judaic and Platonic authority was never realized.

of Persia, as he is called, judging that it would be more for God's honour, and the benefit of his people, that the Median and Persian Monarchy, which delivered them from the Babylonish captivity, should still be uppermost; and the patron of the Grecians, to whom the will of God might be more particularly revealed, contending, on the other side, for the rise of Alexander and his successors, who were appointed to punish the backsliding Jews, and thereby to put them in mind of their offences, that they might repent, and become more virtuous, and more observant of the law revealed. But how far these controversies and appearing enmities of those glorious creatures may be carried; how these oppositions may best be managed, and by what means conducted, is not my business to shew or determine: these things must be left to the invention and judgment of the poet. If any of so happy a genius be now living, or any future age can produce a man who, being conversant in the philosophy of Plato, as it is now accommodated to Christian use; for (as Virgil gives us to understand by his example) that is the only proper [subject], of all others, for an epic poem; who to his natural endowments of a large invention, a ripe judgment, and a strong memory, has joined the knowledge of the liberal arts and sciences, and particularly moral philosophy, the mathematics, geography, and history, and with all these qualifications is born a poet; knows, and can practise the variety of numbers, and is master of the language in which he writes; if such a man, I say, be now arisen, or shall arise, I am vain enough to think that I have proposed a model to him by which he may build a nobler, a more beautiful, and more perfect poem than any yet extant since the Ancients.[1]

There is another part of these machines yet wanting; but by what I have said, it would have been easily supplied by a judicious writer. He could not have failed to add the opposition of ill spirits to the good; they have also their design, ever opposite to that of Heaven; and this alone has hitherto been the practice of the Moderns: but this imperfect system, if I may call it such, which I have given, will infinitely advance and carry farther that hypothesis of the evil spirits contending with the good. For being so much weaker since their fall than those blessed

[1] Dryden evidently despairs of writing the great English epic himself. Cf. preface to *Aeneis*, p. 223, below.

beings, they are yet supposed to have a permitted power from God of acting ill, as from their own depraved nature they have always the will of designing it. A great testimony of which we find in Holy Writ, when God Almighty suffered Satan to appear in the holy synod of the angels (a thing not hitherto drawn into example by any of the poets), and also gave him power over all things belonging to his servant Job, excepting only life.[1]

Now what these wicked spirits cannot compass, by the vast disproportion of their forces to those of the superior beings, they may by their fraud, and cunning carry farther, in a seeming league, confederacy, or subserviency to the designs of some good angel, as far as consists with his purity to suffer such an aid, the end of which may possibly be disguised, and concealed from his finite knowledge. This is indeed to suppose a great error in such a being: yet since a devil can appear like an angel of light; since craft and malice may sometimes blind for a while a more perfect understanding; and lastly, since Milton has given us an example of the like nature, when Satan, appearing like a cherub to Uriel, the Intelligence of the Sun, circumvented him even in his own province, and passed only for a curious traveller through those new created regions that he might observe therein the workmanship of God, and praise him in his works;[2] I know not why, upon the same supposition, or some other, a fiend may not deceive a creature of more excellency than himself, but yet a creature; at least by the connivance, or tacit permission, of the Omniscient Being.

Thus, my Lord, I have, as briefly as I could, given your Lordship, and by you the world, a rude draught of what I have been long labouring in my imagination, and what I had intended to have put in practice (though far unable for the attempt of such a poem), and to have left the stage, to which my genius never much inclined me, for a work which would have taken up my life in the performance of it. This, too, I had intended chiefly for the honour of my native country, to which a poet is particularly obliged. Of two subjects, both relating to it, I was doubtful whether I should choose that of King Arthur conquering

[1] Job I.12.

[2] The reference to *Paradise Lost* (III.636f.) seems long delayed: Dryden is reluctant to admit that his proposal for an epic combining classical and scriptural imagery has already been fulfilled.

the Saxons[1] which, being farther distant in time, gives the greater scope to my invention; or that of Edward, the Black Prince, in subduing Spain, and restoring it to the lawful prince, though a great tyrant, Don Pedro the Cruel:[2] which, for the compass of time, including only the expedition of one year; for the greatness of the action, and its answerable event; for the magnanimity of the English hero, opposed to the ingratitude of the person whom he restored; and for the many beautiful episodes, which I had interwoven with the principal design, together with the characters of the chiefest English persons; wherein, after Virgil and Spenser, I would have taken occasion to represent my living friends and patrons of the noblest families, and also shadowed the events of future ages, in the succession of our imperial line. With these helps, and those of the machines which I have mentioned, I might perhaps have done as well as some of my predecessors; or at least chalked out a way for others to amend my errors in a like design. But being encouraged only with fair words by King Charles II, my little salary ill paid, and no prospect of a future subsistence, I was then discouraged in the beginning of my attempt; and now age has overtaken me; and want, a more insufferable evil, through the change of the times, has wholly disenabled me. Tho' I must ever acknowledge, to the honour of your Lordship, and the eternal memory of your charity, that since this revolution, wherein I have patiently suffered the ruin of my small fortune, and the loss of that poor subsistence which I had from two kings, whom I had served more faithfully than profitably to myself; then your Lordship was pleased, out of no other motive but your own nobleness, without any desert of mine, or the least solicitation from me, to make me a most bountiful present, which at that time, when I was most in want of it, came most seasonably and unexpectedly to my relief. That favour, my Lord, is of itself sufficient to bind any grateful man to a perpetual acknowledgment, and to all the future service which one of my mean condition can be ever able to perform. May the Almighty God return it for me, both in blessing you here, and rewarding you hereafter! I must not presume to defend the cause for which I now suffer, because

[1] A subject Milton had considered as a young man; cf. 'Mansus,' ll. 81f. and pp. 292-3, below.
[2] Cf. dedication to *Aureng-Zebe*, vol. I, p. 191n., above.

your Lordship is engaged against it. But the more you are so, the greater is my obligation to you, for your laying aside all the considerations of factions and parties, to do an action of pure disinterested charity. This is one amongst many of your shining qualities, which distinguish you from others of your rank. But let me add a farther truth that, without these ties of gratitude, and abstracting from them all, I have a most particular inclination to honour you; and, if it were not too bold an expression, to say I love you. 'Tis no shame to be a poet, tho' 'tis to be a bad one. Augustus Cæsar of old, and Cardinal Richelieu of late, would willingly have been such; and David and Solomon were such. You who, without flattery, are the best of the present age in England, and would have been so, had you been born in any other country, will receive more honour in future ages by that one excellency than by all those honours to which your birth has entitled you, or your merits have acquired you.

ne, forte, pudori
sit tibi Musa lyræ sollers, et cantor Apollo.[1]

I have formerly said in this Epistle that I could distinguish your writings from those of any others: 'tis now time to clear myself from any imputation of self-conceit on that subject. I assume not to myself any particular lights in this discovery; they are such only as are obvious to every man of sense and judgment, who loves poetry, and understands it. Your thoughts are always so remote from the common way of thinking that they are, as I may say, of another species than the conceptions of other poets; yet you go not out of nature for any of them. Gold is never bred upon the surface of the ground; but lies so hidden, and so deep, that the mines of it are seldom found; but the force of waters casts it out from the bowels of mountains, and exposes it amongst the sands of rivers; giving us of her bounty what we could not hope for by our search. This success attends your Lordship's thoughts, which would look like chance if it were not perpetual, and always of the same tenour. If I grant that there is care in it, 'tis such a care as would be ineffectual and fruitless in other men. 'Tis the *curiosa felicitas*[2] which Petronius ascribes to Horace in his Odes. We have not wherewithal to imagine so

[1] Horace, *Ars poetica*, ll. 406-7: 'May the Muse skilled in the lyre, and singing Apollo, never cause you shame.'
[2] *Satyricon*, 118.

strongly, so justly, and so pleasantly: in short, if we have the same knowledge, we cannot draw out of it the same quintessence; we cannot give it such a turn, such a propriety, and such a beauty. Something is deficient in the manner, or the words, but more in the nobleness of our conception. Yet when you have finished all, and it appears in its full lustre, when the diamond is not only found, but the roughness smoothed, when it is cut into a form, and set in gold, then we cannot but acknowledge that it is the perfect work of art and nature; and every one will be so vain to think he himself could have performed the like, till he attempts it. 'Tis just the description that Horace makes of such a finished piece: it appears so easy,

> ut sibi quivis
> speret idem, sudet multum, frustraque laboret,
> ausus idem.[1]

And besides all this, 'tis your Lordship's particular talent to lay your thoughts so close together that, were they closer, they would be crowded, and even a due connexion would be wanting. We are not kept in expectation of two good lines which are to come after a long parenthesis of twenty bad; which is the April poetry of other writers, a mixture of rain and sunshine by fits: you are always bright, even almost to a fault, by reason of the excess. There is continual abundance, a magazine of thought, and yet a perpetual variety of entertainment; which creates such an appetite in your reader that he is not cloyed with any thing, but satisfied with all. 'Tis that which the Romans call *cœna dubia*[2]; where there is such plenty, yet withal so much diversity, and so good order, that the choice is difficult betwixt one excellency and another; and yet the conclusion, by a due climax, is evermore the best; that is, as a conclusion ought to be, ever the most proper for its place. See, my Lord, whether I have not studied your Lordship with some application; and since you are so modest that you will not be judge and party, I appeal to the whole world if I have not drawn your picture to a great degree of likeness, tho' 'tis but in miniature; and that some of the best features are yet wanting. Yet what I have done is

[1] *Ars poetica*, ll. 240-2: 'so that anyone may hope to do the same, but may labour hard and find his work in vain.'
[2] Terence, *Phormio*, II.ii.28; Horace, *Satires*, II.ii.77.

enough to distinguish you from any other, which is the proposition that I took upon me to demonstrate.

And now, my Lord, to apply what I have said to my present business: the satires of Juvenal and Persius appearing in this new English dress cannot so properly be inscribed to any man as to your Lordship, who are the first of the age in that way of writing. Your Lordship, amongst many other favours, has given me your permission for this address; and you have particularly encouraged me by your perusal and approbation of the sixth and tenth satires of Juvenal, as I have translated them. My fellow-labourers have likewise commissioned me to perform, in their behalf, this office of a Dedication to you; and will acknowledge with all possible respect and gratitude your acceptance of their work. Some of them have the honour to be known to your Lordship already; and they who have not yet that happiness, desire it now. Be pleased to receive our common endeavours with your wonted candour, without intitling you to the protection of our common failings in so difficult an undertaking. And allow me your patience, if it be not already tired with this long epistle, to give you, from the best authors, the origin, the antiquity, the growth, the change, and the completement of satire among the Romans; to describe, if not define, the nature of that poem, with its several qualifications and virtues, together with the several sorts of it; to compare the excellencies of Horace, Persius, and Juvenal, and shew the particular manners of their satires; and lastly to give an account of this new way of version which is attempted in our performance. All which, according to the weakness of my ability, and the best lights which I can get from others, shall be the subject of my following discourse.

The most perfect work of poetry, says our master Aristotle, is tragedy.[1] His reason, is, because it is the most united; being more severely confined within the rules of action, time, and place. The action is entire, of a piece, and one, without episodes; the time limited to a natural day; and the place circumscribed at least within the compass of one town or city. Being exactly proportioned thus, and uniform in all its parts, the mind is more capable of comprehending the whole beauty of it without distraction.

[1] *Poetics*, ch. xxvi.

But after all these advantages, an heroic poem is certainly the greatest work of human nature.[1] The beauties and perfections of the other are but mechanical; those of the epic are more noble: tho' Homer has limited his place to Troy, and the fields about it; his actions to forty-eight natural days, whereof twelve are holidays, or cessation from business, during the funeral of Patroclus. To proceed: the action of the epic is greater; the extension of time enlarges the pleasure of the reader, and the episodes give it more ornament, and more variety. The instruction is equal; but the first is only instructive, the latter forms a hero, and a prince.

If it signifies anything which of them is of the more ancient family, the best and most absolute heroic poem was written by Homer long before tragedy was invented. But if we consider the natural endowments and acquired parts which are necessary to make an accomplished writer in either kind, tragedy requires a less and more confined knowledge; moderate learning and and observation of the rules is sufficient, if a genius be not wanting. But in an epic poet, one who is worthy of that name, besides an universal genius is required universal learning, together with all those qualities and acquisitions which I have named above, and as many more as I have through haste or negligence omitted. And after all, he must have exactly studied Homer and Virgil as his patterns, Aristotle and Horace as his guides, and Vida and Bossu as their commentators; with many others, both Italian and French critics, which I want leisure here to recommend.

In a word, what I have to say in relation to this subject, which does not particularly concern satire, is that the greatness of an heroic poem, beyond that of a tragedy, may easily be discovered by observing how few have attempted that work in comparison to those who have written dramas; and of those few, how small a number have succeeded. But leaving the critics on either side to contend about the preference due to this or that sort of poetry, I will hasten to my present business, which is the antiquity and origin of satire, according to those informations which I have received from the learned Casaubon,

[1] In effect, this paragraph is a first draft for the opening of his preface to the 1697, *Aeneis*, p. 223, below. But Dryden believes himself to be writing his last critical preface, which perhaps explains his determination to state the order of his literary priorities before turning to satire.

Heinsius, Rigaltius, Dacier, and the Dauphin's *Juvenal*,[1] to which I shall add some observations of my own.

There has been a long dispute amongst the modern critics whether the Romans derived their satire from the Grecians, or first invented it themselves. Julius Scaliger[2] and Heinsius are of the first opinion; Casaubon, Rigaltius, Dacier, and the publisher of the Dauphin's *Juvenal*, maintain the latter. If we take satire in the general signification of the word, as it is used in all modern languages, for an invective, 'tis certain that it is almost as old as verse; and tho' hymns, which are praises of God, may be allowed to have been before it, yet the defamation of others was not long after it. After God had cursed Adam and Eve in Paradise, the husband and wife excused themselves by laying the blame on one another; and gave a beginning to those conjugal dialogues in prose which the poets have perfected in verse. The third chapter of Job is one of the first instances of this poem in holy Scripture; unless we will take it higher, from the latter end of the second, where his wife advises him to curse his Maker.

This original, I confess, is not much to the honour of satire; but here it was nature, and that depraved: when it became an art, it bore better fruit. Only we have learnt thus much already, that scoffs and revilings are of the growth of all nations; and consequently that neither the Greek poets borrowed from other people their art of railing, neither needed the Romans to take it from them. But considering satire as a species of poetry, here the war begins amongst the critics. Scaliger the father will have it descend from Greece to Rome; and derives the word *satire* from *satyrus*, that mixed kind of animal or, as the Ancients thought him, rural god, made up betwixt a man and a goat; with a human head, hooked nose, pouting lips, a bunch or struma under the chin, pricked ears, and upright horns; the body shagged with hair, especially from the waist, and ending

[1] The *De satyrica græcorum poesi et romanorum satira* of Casaubon, published in Paris in 1605, is Dryden's chief source of information concerning the 'original' of satire. The others which he names are Heinsius's edition of Horace (1612), Rigaltius's Juvenal (1616), and Dacier's Horace (1681-9), all with scholarly prefaces. 'Dauphin' refers to the Delphin edition of Juvenal and Persius edited by Prateus (1684). Dryden makes no pretence to original scholarship; but his handling of his scholarly sources here is apt, and full of his own personality.

[2] *Poetices* (1561).

in a goat, with the legs and feet of that creature. But Casaubon and his followers, with reason, condemn this derivation; and prove that from *satyrus* the word *satira*, as it signifies a poem, cannot possibly descend. For *satira* is not properly a substantive, but an adjective; to which the word *lanx*, in English a charger, or large platter, is understood; so that the Greek poem, made according to the manners of a satyr, and expressing his qualities, must properly be called satyrical, and not satire. And thus far 'tis allowed that the Grecians had such poems; but that they were wholly different *in specie* from that to which the Romans gave the name of satire.

Aristotle divides all poetry, in relation to the progress of it, into nature without art, art begun, and art completed.[1] Mankind, even the most barbarous, have the seeds of poetry implanted in them. The first specimen of it was certainly shewn in the praises of the Deity, and prayers to him; and as they are of natural obligation, so they are likewise of divine institution: which Milton observing, introduces Adam and Eve every morning adoring God in hymns and prayers.[2] The first poetry was thus begun in the wild notes of natural poetry before the invention of feet and measures. The Grecians and Romans had no other original of their poetry. Festivals and holidays soon succeeded to private worship, and we need not doubt but they were enjoined by the true God to his own people, as they were afterwards imitated by the heathens; who, by the light of reason, knew they were to invoke some superior Being in their necessities, and to thank him for his benefits. Thus the Grecian holidays were celebrated with offerings to Bacchus and Ceres, and other deities, to whose bounty they supposed they were owing for their corn and wine, and other helps of life. And the ancient Romans, as Horace tells us,[3] paid their thanks to mother Earth, or Vesta, to Silvanus, and their Genius, in the same manner. But as all festivals have a double reason of their institution, the first of religion, the other of recreation, for the unbending of our minds; so both the Grecians and Romans agreed, after their sacrifices were performed, to spend the remainder of the day in sports and merriments; amongst which, songs and dances, and

[1] The following three paragraphs are all adapted from Casaubon, *De satira* (1605), I.i, with some additions.
[2] *Paradise Lost*, V.144f.
[3] *Epistles*, II.i.143 (quoted below, p. 100).

that which they called wit (for want of knowing better) were the chiefest entertainments. The Grecians had a notion of satyrs, whom I have already described; and taking them, and the Sileni, that is, the young satyrs and the old, for the tutors, attendants, and humble companions of their Bacchus, habited themselves like those rural deities, and imitated them in their rustic dances, to which they joined songs, with some sort of rude harmony, but without certain numbers; and to these they added a kind of chorus.

The Romans also (as nature is the same in all places) though they knew nothing of those Grecian demi-gods, nor had any communication with Greece, yet had certain young men who at their festivals danced and sung, after their uncouth manner, to a certain kind of verse which they called Saturnian.[1] What it was, we have no certain light from antiquity to discover; but we may conclude that, like the Grecian, it was void of art, or at least with very feeble beginnings of it. Those ancient Romans, at these holidays, which were a mixture of devotion and debauchery, had a custom of reproaching each other with their faults, in a sort of *extempore* poetry, or rather of tunable hobbling verse; and they answered in the same kind of gross raillery; their wit and their music being of a piece. The Grecians, says Casaubon, had formerly done the same, in the persons of their petulant satyrs: but I am afraid he mistakes the matter, and confounds the singing and dancing of the satyrs with the rustical entertainments of the first Romans. The reason of my opinion is this: that Casaubon, finding little light from antiquity of these beginnings of poetry amongst the Grecians, but only these representations of satyrs, who carried canisters and cornucopias full of several fruits in their hands, and danced with them at their public feasts; and afterwards reading Horace, who makes mention of his homely Romans jesting at one another in the same kind of solemnities, might suppose those wanton satyrs did the same; and especially because Horace possibly might seem to him to have shewn the original of all poetry in general, including the Grecians, as well as Romans; though 'tis plainly otherwise, that he only described the beginning and first rudiments of poetry in his own country. The verses are these, which he

[1] The earliest recorded use of the word as a metrical term, referring to the mysterious metre of Roman poetry before the Greek influence.

cites from the First Epistle of the Second Book, which was written to Augustus:

agricolæ prisci, fortes, parvoque beati,
condita post frumenta, levantes tempore festo
corpus, et ipsum animum spe finis dura ferentem,
cum sociis operum, et pueris, et conjuge fida,
Tellurem porco, Silvanum lacte piabant;
floribus et vino Genium memorem brevis ævi:
fescennina per hunc inventa licentia morem
versibus alternis opprobria rustica fudit.[1]

Our brawny clowns of old, who turn'd the soil,
Content with little, and inur'd to toil,
At harvest-home, with mirth and country cheer,
Restor'd their bodies for another year;
Refresh'd their spirits, and renew'd their hope
Of such a future feast, and future crop.
Then, with their fellow-joggers of the ploughs,
Their little children, and their faithful spouse,
A sow they slew to Vesta's deity,
And kindly milk, Silvanus, pour'd to thee;
With flow'rs, and wine, their Genius they adored;
A short life, and a merry, was the word.
From flowing cups, defaming rhymes ensue,
And at each other homely taunts they threw.

Yet since it is a hard conjecture that so great a man as Casaubon should misapply what Horace writ concerning ancient Rome, to the ceremonies and manners of ancient Greece, I will not insist on this opinion, but rather judge in general, that since all poetry had its original from religion, that of the Grecians and Rome had the same beginning. Both were invented at festivals of thanksgiving, and both were prosecuted with mirth and raillery, and rudiments of verses: amongst the Greeks, by those who represented satyrs; and amongst the Romans, by real clowns.

For, indeed, when I am reading Casaubon on these two subjects, methinks I hear the same story told twice over with very little alteration. Of which Dacier taking notice, in his interpretation of the Latin verses which I have translated, says plainly that the beginning of poetry was the same, with a small variety in both countries; and that the mother of it in all nations was devotion. But what is yet more wonderful, that most

[1] *Epistles*, II.i.139-46.

learned critic takes notice also, in his illustrations on the First Epistle of the Second Book, that as the poetry of the Romans, and that of the Grecians, had the same beginning at feasts and thanksgiving, as it has been observed, and the Old Comedy of the Greeks, which was invective, and the satire of the Romans, which was of the same nature, were begun on the very same occasion, so the fortune of both, in process of time, was just the same; the Old Comedy of the Grecians was forbidden, for its too much licence in exposing of particular persons; and the rude satire of the Romans was also punished by a law of the Decemviri, as Horace tells us in these words:

libertasque recurrentis accepta per annos
lusit amabiliter; donec jam sævus apertam
in rabiem verti cœpit jocus, et per honestas
ire domos impune minax: doluere cruento
dente lacessiti; fuit intactis quoque cura
condicione super communi: quin etiam lex,
pœnaque lata, malo quæ nollet carmine quemquam
describi: vertere modum, formidine fustis
ad bene dicendum delectandumque redacti.[1]

The law of the Decemviri was this: *siquis occentassit malum carmen, sive condidisit, quod infamiam faxit, flagitiumve alteri capital esto.*[2] A strange likeness, and barely possible: but the critics being all of the same opinion, it becomes me to be silent, and to submit to better judgments than my own.

But to return to the Grecians, from whose satyric dramas the elder Scaliger and Heinsius will have the Roman satire to proceed, I am to take a view of them first, and to see if there be any such descent from them as those authors have pretended.

Thespis, or whosoever he were that invented tragedy (for authors differ), mingled with them a chorus and dances of satyrs, which had before been used in the celebration of their festivals; and there they were ever afterwards retained. The

[1] *Ibid.*, 147-55: 'Liberty, welcomed as each year came round, turned into friendly sport, till the jest turned to pure abuse, and passed freely through homes of good repute, threatening all. Some suffered, hurt by its cruel edge; others, unharmed, feared for the public good; till a law was passed, with penalties attached, forbidding any man to be branded with insulting verses. Then they changed their tone, forced by the bludgeon to use civil speech and to give pleasure.'

[2] 'It shall be a capital offence to deliver or write verses which bring another into disrepute or shame.' From a note in the Delphin edition to this epistle.

character of them was also kept, which was mirth and wantonness; and this was given, I suppose, to the folly of the common audience, who soon grow weary of good sense; and as we daily see in our own age and country, are apt to forsake poetry, and still ready to return to buffoonry and farce. From hence it came that, in the Olympic Games, where the poets contended for four prizes, the satyric tragedy was the last of them; for, in the rest, the satyrs were excluded from the chorus. Amongst the plays of Euripides which are yet remaining, there is one of these satyrics which is called the *Cyclops*; in which we may see the nature of those poems, and from thence conclude what likeness they have to the Roman satire.

The story of this Cyclops,[1] whose name was Polyphemus, so famous in the Grecian fables, was that Ulysses, who with his company was driven on that coast of Sicily, where those Cyclops inhabited, coming to ask relief from Silenus, and the satyrs, who were herdsmen to that one-eyed giant, was kindly received by them, and entertained; till being perceived by Polyphemus, they were made prisoners against the rites of hospitality, for which Ulysses eloquently pleaded, were afterwards put down into the den, and some of them devoured; after which Ulysses, having made him drunk, when he was asleep thrust a great firebrand into his eye, and so revenging his dead followers, escaped with the remaining party of the living; and Silenus and the satyrs were freed from their servitude under Polyphemus, and remitted to their first liberty of attending and accompanying their patron Bacchus.

This was the subject of the tragedy, which being one of those that end with a happy event, is therefore by Aristotle judged below the other sort, whose success is unfortunate.[2] Notwithstanding which, the satyrs, who were part of the *dramatis personæ*, as well as the whole chorus, were properly introduced into the nature of the poem, which is mixed of farce and tragedy. The adventure of Ulysses was to entertain the judging part of the audience; and the uncouth persons of Silenus, and the satyrs, to divert the common people with their gross railleries.

Your Lordship has perceived by this time that this satyric tragedy, and the Roman satire, have little resemblance in any of their features. The very kinds are different: for what has a

[1] *Odyssey*, ix. [2] *Poetics*, ch. xiii.

pastoral tragedy to do with a paper of verses satirically written? The character and raillery of the satyrs is the only thing that could pretend to a likeness, were Scaliger and Heinsius alive to maintain their opinion. And the first farces of the Romans, which were the rudiments of their poetry, were written before they had any communication with the Greeks, or indeed any knowledge of that people.

And here it will be proper to give the definition of the Greek satyric poem from Casaubon,[1] before I leave this subject. The satyric, says he, is a dramatic poem annexed to a tragedy, having a chorus, which consists of satyrs. The persons represented in it are illustrious men; the action of it is great; the style is partly serious, and partly jocular; and the event of the action most commonly is happy.

The Grecians, besides these satyric tragedies, had another kind of poem, which they called *silli*, which were more of kin to the Roman satire. Those *silli* were indeed invective poems, but of a different species from the Roman poems of Ennius, Pacuvius, Lucilius, Horace, and the rest of their successors. They were so called, says Casaubon in one place,[2] from Silenus, the foster-father of Bacchus; but in another place, bethinking himself better, he derives their name ἀπὸ τοῦ σιλλαίνειν, from their scoffing and petulancy. From some fragments of the *silli* written by Timon, we may find that they were satyric poems, full of parodies; that is, of verses patched up from great poets, and turned into another sense than their author intended them. Such, amongst the Romans, is the famous *Cento* of Ausonius; where the words are Virgil's, but by applying them to another sense, they are made a relation of a wedding-night; and the act of consummation fulsomely described in the very words of the most modest amongst all poets. Of the same manner are our songs, which are turned into burlesque,[3] and the serious words of the author perverted into a ridiculous meaning. Thus in Timon's *silli*, the words are generally those of Homer and the

[1] *De satira* (1605), I.iii.

[2] Casaubon does not offer this derivation. Kinsley (p. 2,011) suggests Dryden was misled by a misprint in the 1605 edition, where 'Silenorum Xenophanis' appears for 'Sillorum Xenophanis' (*De satira*, p. 286).

[3] I.e. rhyming octosyllables (as Dryden explains at the end of the Discourse) or the metre of *Hudibras*. The usage is difficult to parallel, though Rymer speaks of '*vers burlesque*', perhaps in the same sense, in his *Short View* (1693) (*Critical Works*, ed. Zimansky, p. 89).

tragic poets; but he applies them, satirically, to some customs and kinds of philosophy which he arraigns. But the Romans, not using any of these parodies in their satires, sometimes, indeed, repeating verses of other men, as Persius cites some of Nero's, but not turning them into another meaning, the *silli* cannot be supposed to be the original of Roman satire. To these *silli*, consisting of parodies, we may properly add the satires which were written against particular persons; such as were the iambics of Archilochus against Lycambes, which Horace undoubtedly imitated in some of his Odes and Epodes, whose titles bear sufficient witness of it. I might also name the invective of Ovid against Ibis, and many others; but these are the underwood of satire, rather than the timber-trees: they are not of general extension, as reaching only to some individual person. And Horace seems to have purged himself from those splenetic reflections in his Odes and Epodes, before he undertook the noble work of satires, which were properly so called.

Thus, my Lord, I have at length disengaged myself from those antiquities of Greece; and have proved, I hope, from the best critics, that the Roman satire was not borrowed from thence, but of their own manufacture. I am now almost gotten into my depth; at least, by the help of Dacier, I am swimming towards it. Not that I will promise always to follow him any more than he follows Casaubon; but to keep him in my eye, as my best and truest guide; and where I think he may possibly mislead me, there to have recourse to my own lights, as I expect that others should do by me.

Quintilian says, in plain words, *satira quidem tota nostra est*;[1] and Horace had said the same thing before him, speaking of his predecessor in that sort of poetry, *et Græcis intacti carminis auctor*.[2] Nothing can be clearer than the opinion of the poet and the orator, both the best critics of the two best ages of the Roman Empire, than that satire was wholly of Latin growth, and not transplanted to Rome from Athens. Yet, as I have said, Scaliger the father, according to his custom, that is, insolently enough, contradicts them both; and gives no better reason than the derivation of *satyrus* from σαθυ, *salacitas*; and so, from the

[1] *Institutio oratoria*, X.i.93: 'Satire, indeed, is all ours,' i.e. Roman in origin.

[2] *Satires*, I.x.66: 'author of poetry untouched by the Greeks.' *1693* has '*author*' for '*auctor*.'

lechery of those fauns, thinks he has sufficiently proved that satire is derived from them; as if wantonness and lubricity were essential to that sort of poem, which ought to be avoided in it. His other allegation, which I have already mentioned, is as pitiful; that the satyrs carried platters and canisters full of fruit in their hands. If they had entered empty-handed, had they been ever the less satyrs? Or were the fruits and flowers which they offered any thing of kin to satire? Or any argument that this poem was originally Grecian? Casaubon judged better, and his opinion is grounded on sure authority, that satire was derived from *satura*, a Roman word, which signifies full and abundant; and full also of variety, in which nothing is wanting to its due perfection. 'Tis thus, says Dacier, that we say *a full colour*, when the wool has taken the whole tincture, and drunk in as much of the dye as it can receive. According to this derivation, from *satur* comes *satura*; or *satira*, according to the new spelling; as *optumus* and *maxumus* are now spelled *optimus* and *maximus*. *Satura*, as I have formerly noted, is an adjective, and relates to the word *lanx*, which is understood; and this *lanx*, in English a charger, or large platter, was yearly filled with all sorts of fruits, which were offered to the gods at their festivals, as the *prémices* or first gatherings. These offerings of several sorts thus mingled, 'tis true, were not unknown to the Grecians, who called them πανκαρπὸν θυσίαν, a sacrifice of all sorts of fruits; and πανσπερμίαν, when they offered all kinds of grain. Virgil has mentioned those sacrifices in his *Georgics*:

lancibus et pandis fumantia reddimus exta:

and in another place, *lancesque et liba feremus.*[1] That is, *we offer the smoking entrails in great platters*, and *we will offer the chargers and the cakes*.

The word *satura* has been afterwards applied to many other sorts of mixtures; as Festus calls it a kind of *olla*,[2] or hotchpotch, made of several sorts of meats. Laws were also called *leges saturæ*, when they were of several heads and titles, like our tacked bills of Parliament.[3] And *per saturam legem ferre*, in the Roman Senate, was to carry a law without telling the Senators,

[1] *Georgics*, II.194, 394. [2] Cf. *Of Dramatic Poesy*, vol. I, p. 49n., above.
[3] I.e. a Bill affixed to a money-bill by the Commons, in order to ensure its passage through the Lords.

or counting voices when they were in haste. Sallust uses the word, *per saturam sententias exquirere*, when the majority was visibly on one side. From hence it might probably be conjectured that the *Discourses* or *Satires* of Ennius, Lucilius, and Horace, as we now call them, took their name; because they are full of various matters, and are also written on various subjects, as Porphyrius says.[1] But Dacier affirms that it is not immediately from thence that these satires are so called; for that name had been used formerly for other things, which bore a nearer resemblance to those discourses of Horace. In explaining of which (continues Dacier), a method is to be pursued of which Casaubon himself has never thought, and which will put all things into so clear a light that no farther room will be left for the least dispute.

During the space of almost four hundred years, since the building of their city, the Romans had never known any entertainments of the stage. Chance and jollity first found out those verses which they called *Saturnian* and *Fescennine*; or rather human nature, which is inclined to poetry, first produced them, rude and barbarous and unpolished, as all other operations of the soul are in their beginnings, before they are cultivated with are and study. However, in occasions of merriment they were first practised; and this rough-cast, unhewn poetry was instead ot stage-plays for the space of an hundred and twenty years together. They were made *extempore*, and were, as the French call them, *impromptus*; for which the Tarsians of old were much renowned; and we see the daily examples of them in the Italian farces of Harlequin and Scaramucha. Such was the poetry of that savage people, before it was tuned into numbers, and the harmony of verse. Little of the Saturnian verses is now remaining; we only know from authors that they were nearer prose than poetry, without feet or measure. They were ἔνρυθμοι, but not ἔμμετροι;[2] perhaps they might be used in the solemn part of their ceremonies; and the Fescennine, which were invented after them, in their afternoon's debauchery, because they were scoffing and obscene.

The Fescennine and Saturnian were the same; for as they

[1] I.e. Porphyrio (*fl.* A.D. 2nd century), the Latin grammarian and scholiast cited by Casaubon, *De satira*, II.iv.
[2] I.e. rhythmical, but not metrical.

were called Saturnian from their ancientness, when Saturn reigned in Italy, they were also called Fescennine from Fescenina, a town in the same country, where they were first practised. The actors, with a gross and rustic kind of raillery, reproached each other with their failings; and at the same time were nothing sparing of it to their audience. Somewhat of this custom was afterwards retained in their Saturnalia, or feasts of Saturn, celebrated in December; at least all kind of freedom in speech was then allowed to slaves even against their masters; and we are not without some imitation of it in our Christmas gambols. Soldiers also used those Fescennine verses, after measure and numbers had been added to them, at the triumph of their generals: of which we have an example in the triumph of Julius Cæsar over Gaul, in these expressions:

> Cæsar Gallias subegit, Nicomedes Cæsarem:
> ecce Cæsar nunc triumphat, qui subegit Gallias:
> Nicomedes non triumphat, qui subegit Cæsarem.[1]

The vapours of wine made those first satirical poets amongst the Romans; which, says Dacier, we cannot better represent than by imagining a company of clowns on a holiday, dancing lubberly and upbraiding one another in extempore doggerel, with their defects and vices, and the stories that were told of them in bake-houses and barbers' shops.

When they began to be somewhat better bred, and were entering, as I may say, into the first rudiments of civil conversation, they left these hedge-notes for another sort of poem, somewhat polished, which was also full of pleasant raillery, but without any mixture of obscenity. This sort of poetry appeared under the name of satire, because of its variety; and this satire was adorned with compositions of music, and with dances; but lascivious postures were banished from it. In the Tuscan language, says, Livy,[2] the word *hister* signifies a player; and therefore these actors, which were first brought from Etruria to Rome on occasion of a pestilence, when the Romans were admonished to avert the anger of the gods by plays, in the year *ab urbe condita* cccxc,[3] those actors, I say, were therefore called *histriones*; and that name has since remained, not only to

[1] 'Caesar subdued Gaul, Nicomedes Caesar. Behold how Cæsar now triumphs, who subdued Gaul: but not Nicomedes who subdued Caesar'.
[2] *Historia*, VII.2 (cited by Dacier). [3] I.e. 364 B.C.

actors Roman born, but to all others of every nation. They played not the former extempore stuff of Fescennine verses, or clownish jests; but what they acted was a kind of civil, cleanly farce, with music and dances, and motions that were proper to the subject.

In this condition Livius Andronicus found the stage, when he attempted first, instead of farces, to supply it with a nobler entertainment of tragedies and comedies. This man was a Grecian born, and being made a slave by Livius Salinator, and brought to Rome, had the education of his patron's children committed to him; which trust he discharged so much to the satisfaction of his master that he gave him his liberty.

Andronicus, thus become a freeman of Rome, added to his own name that of Livius his master; and, as I observed, was the first author of a regular play in that commonwealth. Being already instructed, in his native country, in the manners and decencies of the Athenian theatre, and conversant in the *Archæa Comœdia*, or Old Comedy of Aristophanes and the rest of the Grecian poets, he took from that model his own designing of plays for the Roman stage; the first of which was represented in the year 514 since the building of Rome,[1] as Tully, from the commentaries of Atticus, has assured us: it was after the end of the first Punic war, the year before Ennius was born. Dacier has not carried the matter altogether thus far; he only says that one Livius Andronicus was the first stage-poet at Rome; but I will adventure on this hint to advance another proposition, which I hope the learned will approve. And though we have not any thing of Andronicus remaining to justify my conjecture, yet 'tis exceeding probable that, having read the works of those Grecian wits his countrymen, he imitated not only the groundwork, but also the manner of their writing; and how grave soever his tragedies might be, yet in his comedies he expressed the way of Aristophanes, Eupolis, and the rest, which was to call some persons by their own names, and to expose their defects to the laughter of the people; the examples of which we have in the forementioned Aristophanes, who turned the wise Socrates into ridicule, and is also very free with the management of Cleon, Alcibiades, and other ministers of the Athenian government. Now if this be granted, we may easily suppose that the first

[1] I.e. 239 B.C.

hint of satirical plays on the Roman stage was given by the Greeks: not from their *satyrica*, for that has been reasonably exploded in the former part of this discourse; but from their Old Comedy, which was imitated first by Livius Andronicus. And then Quintilian and Horace must be cautiously interpreted, where they affirm that satire is wholly Roman, and a sort of verse which was not touched on by the Grecians. The reconcilement of my opinion to the standard of their judgment is not however very difficult, since they spoke of satire, not as in its first elements, but as it was formed into a separate work; begun by Ennius, pursued by Lucilius, and completed afterwards by Horace. The proof depends only on this *postulatum*, that the comedies of Andronicus, which were imitations of the Greek, were also imitations of their railleries, and reflections on particular persons. For if this be granted me, which is a most probable supposition, 'tis easy to infer that the first light which was given to the Roman theatrical satire was from the plays of Livius Andronicus; which will be more manifestly discovered when I come to speak of Ennius. In the meantime I will return to Dacier.

The people, says he, ran in crowds to these new entertainments of Andronicus, as to pieces which were more noble in their kind and more perfect than their former satires, which for some time they neglected and abandoned. But not long after they took them up again, and then they joined them to their comedies; playing them at the end of every drama, as the French continue at this day to act their farces, in the nature of a separate entertainment from their tragedies. But more particularly they were joined to the Atellane fables, says Casaubon; which were plays invented by the Osci. Those fables, says Valerius Maximus,[1] out of Livy, were tempered with the Italian severity, and free from any note of infamy, or obsceneness; and, as an old commentator on Juvenal affirms, the Exodiarii, which were singers and dancers, entered to entertain the people with light songs, and mimical gestures, that they might not go away oppressed with melancholy from those serious pieces of the theatre. So that the ancient satire of the Romans was in extemporary reproaches; the next was farce, which was brought from Tuscany; to that succeeded the plays of Andronicus, from the Old Comedy of the Grecians; and out of all these sprung two several branches of new Roman

[1] Valerius Maximus, II.iv.4 (cited by Casaubon).

satire, like different scions from the same root, which I shall prove with as much brevity as the subject will allow.

A year after Andronicus had opened the Roman stage with his new dramas, Ennius was born; who, when he was grown to man's estate, having seriously considered the genius of the people, and how eagerly they followed the first satires, thought it would be worth his pains to refine upon the project, and to write satires not to be acted on the theatre, but read. He preserved the groundwork of their pleasantry, their venom, and their raillery on particular persons, and general vices; and by this means, avoiding the danger of any ill success in a public representation, he hoped to be as well received in the cabinet, as Andronicus had been upon the stage. The event was answerable to his expectation. He made discourses in several sorts of verse, varied often in the same paper; retaining still in the title their original name of satire. Both in relation to the subjects, and the variety of matters contained in them, the satires of Horace are entirely like them; only Ennius, as I said, confines not himself to one sort of verse, as Horace does; but taking example from the Greeks, and even from Homer himself in his *Margites*, which is a kind of satire, as Scaliger observes, gives himself the licence, when one sort of numbers comes not easily, to run into another as his fancy dictates. For he makes no difficulty to mingle hexameters with iambic trimeters, or with trochaic tetrameters; as appears by those fragments which are yet remaining of him. Horace has thought him worthy to be copied; inserting many things of his into his own satires, as Virgil has done into his *Æneids*.

Here we have Dacier making out that Ennius was the first satirist in that way of writing, which was of his invention; that is, satire abstracted from the stage, and new modelled into papers of verses on several subjects. But he will have Ennius take the groundwork of satire from the first farces of the Romans, rather than from the formed plays of Livius Andronicus, which were copied from the Grecian comedies. It may possibly be so; but Dacier knows no more of it than I do. And it seems to me the more probable opinion that he rather imitated the fine railleries of the Greeks, which he saw in the pieces of Andronicus, than the coarseness of his old countrymen in their clownish extemporary way of jeering.

But besides this, 'tis universally granted that Ennius, though an Italian, was excellently learned in the Greek language. His verses were stuffed with fragments of it, even to a fault; and he himself believed, according to the Pythagorean opinion, that the soul of Homer was transfused into him; which Persius observes in his sixth satire: *postquam destertuit esse Mæonides*. But this being only the private opinion of so inconsiderable a man as I am, I leave it to the farther disquisition of the critics, if they think it worth their notice. Most evident it is, that whether he imitated the Roman farce, or the Greek comedies, he is to be acknowledged for the first author of Roman satire, as it is properly so called, and distinguished from any sort of stage-play.

Of Pacuvius, who succeeded him, there is little to be said, because there is so little remaining of him: only that he is taken to be the nephew of Ennius, his sister's son; that in probability he was instructed by his uncle in his way of satire, which we are told he has copied; but what advances he made we know not.

Lucilius came into the world when Pacuvius flourished most. He also made satires after the manner of Ennius, but he gave them a more graceful turn, and endeavoured to imitate more closely the *vetus comœdia* of the Greeks, of the which the old original Roman satire had no idea, till the time of Livius Andronicus. And though Horace seems to have made Lucilius the first author of satire in verse amongst the Romans, in these words:

quid? cum est Lucilius ausus
primus in hunc operis componere carmina morem,[1]

he is only thus to be understood, that Lucilius had given a more graceful turn to the satire of Ennius and Pacuvius, not that he invented a new satire of his own: and Quintilian seems to explain this passage of Horace in these words: *satira quidem tota nostra est, in qua primus insignem laudem adeptus est Lucilius*.[2]

Thus, both Horace and Quintilian give a kind of primacy of honour to Lucilius amongst the Latin satirists. For as the Roman language grew more refined, so much more capable it was of receiving the Grecian beauties in his time: Horace and Quintilian could mean no more than that Lucilius writ better than Ennius

[1] *Satires*, II.i.62-3: 'What? When Lucilius first dared to write such poems. . . .'

[2] *Op cit.*: 'Satire, indeed, is all ours, in which the first to win fame was Lucilius.'

and Pacuvius; and on the same account we prefer Horace to Lucilius. Both of them imitated the old Greek comedy; and so did Ennius and Pacuvius before them. The polishing of the Latin tongue, in the succession of times, made the only difference; and Horace himself, in two of his satires, written purposely on this subject, thinks the Romans of his age were too partial in their commendations of Lucilius; who writ not only loosely, and muddily, with little art, and much less care, but also in a time when the Latin tongue was not yet sufficiently purged from the dregs of barbarism; and many significant and sounding words which the Romans wanted were not admitted even in the times of Lucretius and Cicero, of which both complain.

But to proceed: Dacier justly taxes Casaubon for saying that the satires of Lucilius were wholly different *in specie* from those of Ennius and Pacuvius.[1] Casaubon was led into that mistake by Diomedes the grammarian, who in effect says this: satire amongst the Romans, but not amongst the Greeks, was a biting invective poem, made after the model of the ancient comedy for the reprehension of vices; such as were the poems of Lucilius, of Horace, and of Persius. But in former times, the name of satire was given to poems which were composed of several sorts of verses, such as were made by Ennius and Pacuvius; more fully expressing the etymology of the word *satire* from *satura*, which we have observed. Here 'tis manifest that Diomedes makes a specifical distinction betwixt the satires of Ennius and those of Lucilius. But this, as we say in English, is only a distinction without a difference; for the reason of it is ridiculous, and absolutely false. This was that which cozened honest Casaubon who, relying on Diomedes, had not sufficiently examined the origin and nature of those two satires; which were entirely the same both in the matter and the form. For all that Lucilius performed beyond his predecessors, Ennius and Pacuvius, was only the adding of more politeness, and more salt, without any change in the substance of the poem. And tho' Lucilius put not together in the same satire several sorts of verses, as Ennius did, yet he composed several satires, of several sorts of verses, and mingled them with Greek verses: one poem consisted only of

[1] Dryden, following Dacier, misinterprets Casaubon (II.iii), who had argued that Lucilius and Ennius wrote of different things, but in similar poetic form.

hexameters, and another was entirely of iambics; a third of trochaics; as is visible by the fragments yet remaining of his works. In short, if the satires of Lucilius are therefore said to be wholly different from those of Ennius, because he added much more of beauty and polishing to his own poems than are to be found in those before him, it will follow from hence that the satires of Horace are wholly different from those of Lucilius, because Horace has not less surpassed Lucilius in the elegancy of his writing than Lucilius surpassed Ennius in the turn and ornament of his. This passage of Diomedes has also drawn Dousa, the son,[1] into the same error of Casaubon, which I say not to expose the little failings of those judicious men, but only make it appear, with how much diffidence and caution we are to read their works when they treat a subject of so much obscurity, and so very ancient, as is this of satire.

Having thus brought down the history of satire from its original to the times of Horace, and shewn the several changes of it, I should here discover some of those graces which Horace added to it, but that I think it will be more proper to defer that undertaking till I make the comparison betwixt him and Juvenal. In the meanwhile, following the order of time, it will be necessary to say somewhat of another kind of satire, which also was descended from the Ancient: 'tis that which we call the Varronian Satire, but which Varro himself calls the Menippean; because Varro, the most learned of the Romans, was the first author of it, who imitated in his works the manner of Menippus the Gadarenian, who professed the philosophy of the Cynics.

This sort of satire was not only composed of several sorts of verse, like those of Ennius, but was also mixed with prose; and Greek was sprinkled amongst the Latin. Quintilian, after he had spoken of the satire of Lucilius, adds what follows: *there is another and former kind of satire, composed by Terentius Varro, the most learned of the Romans; in which he was not satisfied alone with mingling in it several sorts of verse.*[2] The only difficulty of this passage is that Quintilian tells us that this satire of Varro was of a former kind. For how can we possibly imagine this to be, since Varro, who was contemporary to Cicero, must con-

[1] From Dacier. Franciscus Dousa, the editor of the fragments of Lucilius (1597), was the son of Janus Dousa.
[2] *Institutio oratoria*, X.i.95.

sequently be after Lucilius? But Quintilian meant not that the satire of Varro was in order of time before Lucilius; he would only give us to understand that the Varronian satire, with mixture of several sorts of verses, was more after the manner of Ennius and Pacuvius than that of Lucilius, who was more severe, and more correct, and gave himself less liberty in the mixture of his verses in the same poem.

We have nothing remaining of those Varronian satires, excepting some inconsiderable fragments, and those for the most part much corrupted. The titles of many of them are indeed preserved, and they are generally double; from whence, at least, we may understand, how many various subjects were treated by that author. Tully, in his *Academics*, introduces Varro himself giving us some light concerning the scope and design of these works. Wherein after he had shewn his reasons why he did not *ex professo* write of philosophy, he adds what follows: *Notwithstanding*, says he, *that those pieces of mine, wherein I have imitated Menippus, though I have not translated him, are sprinkled with a kind of mirth and gaiety, yet many things are there inserted, which are drawn from the very entrails of philosophy, and many things severely argued; which I have mingled with pleasantries on purpose, that they may more easily go down with the common sort of unlearned readers.*[1] The rest of the sentence is so lame that we can only make thus much out of it, that in the composition of his satires he so tempered philology with philosophy that his work was a mixture of them both. And Tully himself confirms us in this opinion, when a little after he addresses himself to Varro in these words: *and you yourself have composed a most elegant and complete poem; you have begun philosophy in many places: sufficient to incite us, though too little to instruct us.* Thus it appears that Varro was one of those writers whom they called σπουδογέλοιοι,[2] studious of laughter; and that, as learned as he was, his business was more to divert his reader than to teach him. And he entitled his own satires *Menippean*; not that Menippus had written any satires (for his were either dialogues or epistles), but that Varro imitated his style, his manner, and his facetiousness. All that we know farther of Menippus and his writings, which are wholly lost, is that by some he is esteemed as, amongst the rest, by

[1] Cicero, *Academics*, I.ii (quoted by Casaubon, II.ii).
[2] Strabo, xvi, quoted by Casaubon.

Varro; by others he is noted of cynical impudence and obscenity: that he was much given to those parodies which I have already mentioned; that is, he often quoted the verses of Homer and the tragic poets, and turned their serious meaning into something that was ridiculous; whereas Varro's satires are by Tully called absolute, and most elegant and various poems. Lucian, who was emulous of this Menippus, seems to have imitated both his manners and his style in many of his dialogues; where Menippus himself is often introduced as a speaker in them, and as a perpetual buffoon; particularly his character is expressed in the beginning of that dialogue which is called Νεκυομαντεία. But Varro, in imitating him, avoids his impudence and filthiness, and only expresses his witty pleasantry.

This we may believe for certain, that as his subjects were various, so most of them were tales or stories of his own invention. Which is also manifest from antiquity, by those authors who are acknowledged to have written Varronian satires, in imitation of his; of whom the chief is Petronius Arbiter, whose satire, they say, is now printing in Holland, wholly recovered, and made complete. When 'tis made public, it will easily be seen by any one sentence whether it be supposititious or genuine.[1] Many of Lucian's dialogues may also properly be called Varronian satires, particularly his *True History*; and consequently the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, which is taken from him. Of the same stamp is the mock deification[2] of Claudius by Seneca: and the *Symposium* or *Cæsars* of Julian the Emperor. Amongst the Moderns, we may reckon the *Encomium Moriæ* of Erasmus, Barclay's *Euphormio*,[3] and a volume of German authors[4] which my ingenious friend Mr Charles Killigrew once lent me. In the English, I remember none which are mixed with prose, as Varro's were: but of the same kind is *Mother Hubbard's Tale* in Spenser; and (if it be not too vain to mention anything of my own) the poems of *Absalom* and *Mac Flecknoe*.

This is what I have to say in general of satire: only, as Dacier

[1] The pseudo-Petronius *Satyricon cum fragmentis Albae Graecae recuperatis anno 1688*, published in Cologne in 1691. Dryden evidently had not seen it. Bentley called it 'that scandal to all forgeries.'

[2] Seneca wrote a skit in prose and verse for Nero, the *Apocolocyntosis*.

[3] John Barclay, *Euphormionis Lusinini Satyricon* (1603-7), a satirical romance.

[4] Perhaps the collection entitled *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* (1515-17), as Ker suggests.

has observed before me, we may take notice that the word *satire* is of a more general signification in Latin than in French or English. For amongst the Romans it was not only used for those discourses which decried vice, or exposed folly, but for others also, where virtue was recommended. But in our modern languages we apply it only to invective poems, where the very name of satire is formidable to those persons who would appear to the world what they are not in themselves; for in English, to say satire is to mean reflection,[1] as we use that word in the worst sense; or as the French call it, more properly, *médisance*. In the criticism of spelling, it ought to be with *i* and not with *y*, to distinguish its true derivation from *satura*, not from *satyrus*. And if this be so, then 'tis false spelled throughout this book; for here 'tis written *satyr*: which having not considered at the first, I thought it not worth correcting afterwards. But the French are more nice, and never spell it any other ways than *satire*.

I am now arrived at the most difficult part of my undertaking, which is to compare Horace with Juvenal and Persius. 'Tis observed by Rigaltius, in his preface before Juvenal written to Thuanus,[2] that these three poets have all their particular partisans and favourers. Every commentator, as he has taken pains with any of them, thinks himself obliged to prefer his author to the other two; to find out their failings, and decry them, that he may make room for his own darling. Such is the partiality of mankind, to set up that interest which they have once espoused, though it be to the prejudice of truth, morality, and common justice; and especially in the productions of the brain. As authors generally think themselves the best poets, because they cannot go out of themselves to judge sincerely of their betters; so it is with critics, who having first taken a liking to one of these poets, proceed to comment on him, and to illustrate him; after which they fall in love with their own labours, to that degree of blind fondness that at length they defend and exalt their author, not so much for his sake as for their own. 'Tis a folly of the same nature with that of the Romans themselves, in their games of the Circus: the spectators were divided in their factions betwixt the Veneti and the Prasini; some were for the charioteer in blue, and

[1] I.e. blame, censure. Cf. Richardson, *Clarissa* (1748), I.vi: 'If I have deserved reflection, let me not be spared.' Cf. p. 136, below.
[2] *De satyra Juvenalis*, an edition published in Paris in 1616.

some for him in green. The colours themselves were but a fancy; but when once a man had taken pains to set out those of his party, and had been at the trouble of procuring voices for them, the case was altered: he was concerned for his own labour, and that so earnestly, that disputes and quarrels, animosities, commotions, and bloodshed, often happened; and in the declension of the Grecian Empire, the very sovereigns themselves engaged in it, even when the barbarians were at their doors; and stickled for the preference of colours, when the safety of their people was in question. I am now myself on the brink of the same precipice; I have spent some time on the translation of Juvenal and Persius; and it behoves me to be wary lest, for that reason, I should be partial to them, or take a prejudice against Horace. Yet, on the other side, I would not be like some of our judges, who would give the cause for a poor man, right or wrong; for, though that be an error on the better hand, yet it is still a partiality: and a rich man, unheard, cannot be concluded an oppressor. I remember a saying of K. Charles the Second on Sir Matthew Hales[1] (who was doubtless an uncorrupt and upright man) that his servants were sure to be cast on any trial which was heard before him; not that he thought the judge was possibly to be bribed, but that his integrity might be too scrupulous; and that the causes of the crown were always suspicious when the privileges of subjects were concerned.

It had been much fairer, if the modern critics who have embarked in the quarrels of their favourite authors had rather given to each his proper due; without taking from another's heap to raise their own. There is praise enough for each of them in particular, without encroaching on his fellows, and detracting from them, or enriching themselves with the spoils of others. But to come to particulars: Heinsius and Dacier are the most principal of those who raise Horace above Juvenal and Persius. Scaliger the father, Rigaltius, and many others, debase Horace that they may set up Juvenal; and Casaubon, who is almost single, throws dirt on Juvenal and Horace, that he may exalt Persius, whom he understood particularly well, and better than any of his former commentators; even Stelluti,[2] who succeeded

[1] Sir Matthew Hale (1609-76), who had been Lord Chief Justice from 1671 to 1676.

[2] Stelluti's edition of Persius, with an Italian translation, had appeared in Rome in 1630.

him. I will begin with him who, in my opinion, defends the weakest cause, which is that of Persius; and labouring, as Tacitus professes of his own writing, to divest myself of partiality, or prejudice, consider Persius, not as a poet whom I have wholly translated, and who has cost me more labour and time than Juvenal, but according to what I judge to be his own merit; which I think not equal, in the main, to that of Juvenal or Horace, and yet in some things to be preferred to both of them.

First, then, for the verse; neither Casaubon himself, nor any for him, can defend either his numbers, or the purity of his Latin. Casaubon gives this point for lost, and pretends not to justify either the measures or the words of Persius; he is evidently beneath Horace and Juvenal in both.

Then, as his verse is scabrous, and hobbling, and his words not everywhere well chosen, the purity of Latin being more corrupted than in the time of Juvenal,[1] and consequently of Horace, who writ when the language was in the height of its perfection; so his diction is hard, his figures are generally too bold and daring, and his tropes, particularly his metaphors, insufferably strained.

In the third place, notwithstanding all the diligence of Casaubon, Stelluti, and a Scotch gentleman[2] (whom I have heard extremely commended for his illustrations of him) yet he is still obscure: whether he affected not to be understood, but with difficulty; or whether the fear of his safety under Nero compelled him to this darkness in some places; or that it was occasioned by his close way of thinking, and the brevity of his style, and crowding of his figures; or lastly, whether after so long a time many of his words have been corrupted, and many customs, and stories relating to them, lost to us; whether some of these reasons, or all, concurred to render him so cloudy; we may be bold to affirm that the best of commentators can but guess at his meaning, in many passages; and none can be certain that he has divined rightly.

After all, he was a young man, like his friend and contemporary Lucan; both of them men of extraordinary parts, and

[1] An odd slip. Dryden, who later names the emperors under whom the satirists lived, here forgets that Persius (A.D. 34-62) lived before Juvenal (*c.* A.D. 60-*c.* 140).

[2] David Wedderburn (1580-1646), the Latin poet of Aberdeen whose edition of Persius had appeared in Amsterdam in 1664.

great acquired knowledge, considering their youth. But neither of them had arrived to that maturity of judgment which is necessary to the accomplishing of a formed poet. And this consideration, as on the one hand it lays some imperfections to their charge, so on the other side 'tis a candid excuse for those failings which are incident to youth and inexperience; and we have more reason to wonder how they, who died before the thirtieth year of their age, could write so well, and think so strongly, than to accuse them of those faults from which human nature, and more especially in youth, can never possibly be exempted.

To consider Persius yet more closely: he rather insulted over vice and folly, than exposed them like Juvenal and Horace. And as chaste and modest as he is esteemed, it cannot be denied but that in some places he is broad and fulsome, as the latter verses of the fourth satire, and of the sixth, sufficiently witness. And 'tis to be believed that he who commits the same crime often, and without necessity, cannot but do it with some kind of pleasure.

To come to a conclusion: he is manifestly below Horace, because he borrows most of his greatest beauties from him; and Casaubon is so far from denying this that he has written a treatise purposely concerning it, wherein he shews a multitude of his translations from Horace, and his imitations of him, for the credit of his author; which he calls *Imitatio Horatiana*.

To these defects, which I casually observed while I was translating this author, Scaliger has added others. He calls him, in plain terms, a silly writer, and a trifler; full of ostentation of his learning; and after all, unworthy to come into competition with Juvenal and Horace.

After such terrible accusations, 'tis time to hear what his patron Casaubon can allege in his defence. Instead of answering, he excuses for the most part; and when he cannot, accuses others of the same crimes. He deals with Scaliger as a modest scholar with a master. He compliments him with so much reverence that one would swear he feared him as much at least as he respected him. Scaliger will not allow Persius to have any wit: Casaubon interprets this in the mildest sense, and confesses his author was not good at turning things into a pleasant ridicule; or, in other words, that he was not a laughable writer. That he was *ineptus*, indeed, but that was *non aptissimus ad jocandum*.

But that he was ostentatious of his learning, that, by Scaliger's good favour, he denies. Persius shewed his learning, but was no boaster of it; he did *ostendere*, but not *ostentare*; and so, he says, did Scaliger: where, methinks, Casaubon turns it handsomely upon that supercilious critic, and silently insinuates that he himself was sufficiently vainglorious, and a boaster of his own knowledge. All the writing of this venerable censor, continues Casaubon, which are χρυσοῦ χρυσότερα, more golden than gold itself, are everywhere smelling of that thyme which, like a bee, he has gathered from ancient authors; but far be ostentation and vainglory from a gentleman so well born, and so nobly educated as Scaliger. But, says Scaliger, he is so obscure, that he has got himself the name of Scotinus, a dark writer. Now, says Casaubon, 'tis a wonder to me that anything could be obscure to the divine wit of Scaliger, from which nothing could be hidden. This is indeed a strong compliment, but not defence. And Casaubon, who could not but be sensible of his author's blind side, thinks it time to abandon a post that was untenable. He acknowledges that Persius is obscure in some places; but so is Plato, so is Thucydides; so are Pindar, Theocritus, and Aristophanes, amongst the Greek poets; and even Horace and Juvenal, he might have added, amongst the Romans. The truth is, Persius is not sometimes, but generally, obscure; and therefore Casaubon at last, is forced to excuse him by alleging that it was *se defendendo*, for fear of Nero; and that he was commanded to write so cloudily by Cornutus, in virtue of holy obedience to his master. I cannot help my own opinion; I think Cornutus needed not to have read many lectures to him on that subject. Persius was an apt scholar; and when he was bidden to be obscure in some places, where his life and safety were in question, took the same counsel for all his book; and never afterwards wrote ten lines together clearly. Casaubon, being upon this chapter, has not failed, we may be sure, of making a compliment to his own dear comment. If Persius, says he, be in himself obscure, yet my interpretation has made him intelligible. There is no question but he deserves that praise which he has given to himself; but the nature of the thing, as Lucretius says, will not admit of a perfect explanation. Besides many examples which I could urge, the very last verse of his last satire, upon which he particularly values himself in his preface, is not yet sufficiently explicated.

'Tis true, Holyday[1] has endeavoured to justify his construction; but Stelluti is against it; and, for my part, I can have but a very dark notion of it. As for the chastity of his thoughts, Casaubon denies not but that one particular passage, in the fourth satire, *at si unctus cesses*, etc., is not only the most obscure, but the most obscene of all his works. I understood it; but for that reason turned it over. In defence of his boisterous metaphors, he quotes Longinus, who accounts them as instruments of the sublime; fit to move and stir up the affections, particularly in narration. To which it may be replied that where the trope is far-fetched and hard, 'tis fit for nothing but to puzzle the understanding; and may be reckoned amongst those things of Demosthenes which Æschines called θαύματα not ῥήματα,[2] that is, prodigies, not words. It must be granted to Casaubon that the knowledge of many things is lost in our modern ages which were of familiar notice to the Ancients; and that satire is a poem of a difficult nature in itself, and is not written to vulgar readers. And through the relation which it has to comedy, the frequent change of persons makes the sense perplexed, when we can but divine who it is that speaks; whether Persius himself, or his friend and monitor; or, in some places, a third person. But Casaubon comes back always to himself, and concludes that if Persius had not been obscure there had been no need of him for an interpreter. Yet when he had once enjoined himself so hard a task, he then considered the Greek proverb, that he must χελώνης φαγεῖν ἢ μὴ φαγεῖν, either eat the whole snail, or let it quite alone; and so he went through with his laborious task, as I have done with my difficult translation.

Thus far, my Lord, you see it has gone very hard with Persius: I think he cannot be allowed to stand in competition either with Juvenal or Horace. Yet, for once, I will venture to be so vain as to affirm that none of his hard metaphors, or forced expressions, are in my translation. But more of this in its proper place, where I shall say somewhat in particular of our general performance, in making these two authors English. In the meantime, I think

[1] Barten Holyday (1593-1661), the Oxford clergyman whose version of Persius had appeared as early as 1616; though his Juvenal did not appear until 1673, after his death, together with a fourth edition of the Persius. Dryden admired him as a commentator but despised his translations, as later appears.

[2] *Ctes.*, 167. Aeschinus was Demosthenes's rival as an orator.

myself obliged to give Persius his undoubted due, and to acquaint the world, with Casaubon, in what he has equalled, and in what excelled, his two competitors.

A man who has resolved to praise an author, with any appearance of justice, must be sure to take him on the strongest side, and where he is least liable to exceptions. He is therefore obliged to choose his mediums accordingly. Casaubon, who saw that Persius could not laugh with a becoming grace, that he was not made for jesting, and that a merry conceit was not his talent, turned his feather, like an Indian, to another light, that he might give it the better gloss. Moral doctrine, says he, and urbanity, or well-mannered wit, are the two things which constitute the Roman satire. But of the two, that which is most essential to this poem, and is, as it were, the very soul which animates it, is the scourging of vice and exhortation to virtue. Thus wit, for a good reason, is already almost out of doors; and allowed only for an instrument, a kind of tool, or a weapon, as he calls it, of which the satirist makes use in the compassing of his design. The end and aim of our three rivals is consequently the same. But by what methods they have prosecuted their intention is farther to be considered. Satire is of the nature of moral philosophy, as being instructive:[1] he, therefore, who instructs most usefully, will carry the palm from his two antagonists. The philosophy in which Persius was educated, and which he professes through his whole book, is the Stoic; the most noble, most generous, most beneficial to human kind, amongst all the sects, who have given us the rules of ethics, thereby to form a severe virtue in the soul; to raise in us an undaunted courage against the assaults of fortune; to esteem as nothing the things that are without us, because they are not in our power; not to value riches, beauty, honours, fame, or health, any farther than as conveniences, and so many helps to living as we ought, and doing good in our generation. In short, to be always happy, while we possess our minds with a good conscience, are free from the slavery of vices, and conform our actions and conversation to the rules of right reason. See here, my Lord, an epitome of

[1] Cf. preface to *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681): 'The true end of satire is the amendment of vices by correction. And he who writes honestly is no more an enemy to the offender than the physician to the patient when he prescribes harsh remedies to an inveterate disease.'

Epictetus; the doctrine of Zeno, and the education of our Persius. And this he expressed, not only in all his satires, but in the manner of his life. I will not lessen this commendation of the Stoic philosophy by giving you an account of some absurdities in their doctrine, and some perhaps impieties, if we consider them by the standard of Christian faith: Persius has fallen into none of them; and therefore is free from those imputations. What he teaches might be taught from pulpits, with more profit to the audience than all the nice speculations of divinity, and controversies concerning faith, which are more for the profit of the shepherd than for the edification of the flock. Passion, interest, ambition, and all their bloody consequences of discord and of war, are banished from this doctrine. Here is nothing proposed but the quiet and tranquillity of mind; virtue lodged at home, and afterwards diffused in her general effects, to the improvement and good of human kind. And therefore I wonder not that the present Bishop of Salisbury[1] has recommended this our author, and the tenth satire of Juvenal, in his Pastoral Letter, to the serious perusal and practice of the divines in his diocese, as the best commonplaces for their sermons, as the store-houses and magazines of moral virtues, from whence they may draw out, as they have occasion, all manner of assistance for the accomplishment of a virtuous life, which the Stoics have assigned for the great end and perfection of mankind. Herein, then, it is that Persius has excelled both Juvenal and Horace. He sticks to his one philosophy; he shifts not sides, like Horace, who is sometimes an Epicurean, sometimes a Stoic, sometimes an Eclectic, as his present humour leads him; nor declaims like Juvenal against vices, more like an orator than a philosopher. Persius is everywhere the same: true to the dogmas of his master. What he has learnt, he teaches vehemently; and what he teaches, that he practises himself. There is a spirit of sincerity in all he says; you may easily discern that he is in earnest and is persuaded of that truth which he inculcates. In this I am of opinion that he excels Horace, who is commonly in jest, and laughs while he instructs; and is equal

[1] Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715), *A Discourse of the Pastoral Care* (1692), p. 162: 'The satirical poets Horace, Juvenal, and Persius, may contribute wonderfully to give a man a detestation of vice, and a contempt of the common methods of mankind. . . . Persius his second satire may well pass for one of the best lectures in divinity.'

to Juvenal, who was as honest and serious as Persius, and more he could not be.

Hitherto I have followed Casaubon, and enlarged upon him; because I am satisfied that he says no more than truth; the rest is almost all frivolous. For he says that Horace, being the son of a tax-gatherer, or a collector, as we call it, smells everywhere of meanness of his birth and education: his conceits are vulgar, like the subjects of his satires; that he does *plebeium sapere*,[1] and writes not with that elevation which becomes a satirist: that Persius, being nobly born, and of an opulent family, had likewise the advantage of a better master; Cornutus being the most learned of his time, a man of the most holy life, a chief of the Stoic sect at Rome, and not only a great philosopher, but a poet himself, and in probability a coadjutor of Persius; that, as for Juvenal, he was long a declaimer, came late to poetry, and had not been much conversant in philosophy.

'Tis granted that the father of Horace was *libertinus*, that is, one degree removed from his grandfather, who had been once a slave. But Horace, speaking of him, gives him the best character of a father which I ever read in history; and I wish a witty friend of mine[2] now living had such another. He bred him in the best school, and with the best company of young noblemen. And Horace, by his gratitude to his memory, gives a certain testimony that his education was ingenuous. After this, he formed himself abroad, by the conversation of great men. Brutus found him at Athens, and was so pleased with him that he took him thence into the army, and made him *tribunus militum*, a colonel in a legion, which was the preferment of an old soldier. All this was before his acquaintance with Mæcenas, and his introduction into the court of Augustus, and the familiarity of that great emperor; which, had he not been well-bred before, had been enough to civilise his conversation, and render him accomplished and knowing in all the arts of complacency and good behaviour; and, in short, an agreeable companion for the retired hours and privacies of a favourite, who was first minister. So that, upon the whole matter, Persius may be acknowledged to be equal with

[1] 'taste of the common herd.'

[2] William Wycherley (1640?-1715), whose father had refused to pay his debts. His comedy *The Plain Dealer* (1677), which Dryden had praised as a 'useful' satire in his preface to *The State of Innocence*, vol. I, p. 199, above, attacks the selfishness of friends and relatives.

him in those respects, tho' better born, and Juvenal inferior to both. If the advantage be anywhere, 'tis on the side of Horace; as much as the Court of Augustus Cæsar was superior to that of Nero. As for the subjects which they treated, it will appear hereafter that Horace writ not vulgarly on vulgar subjects, nor always chose them. His style is constantly accommodated to his subject, either high or low. If his fault be too much lowness, that of Persius is the fault of the hardness of his metaphors, and obscurity: and so they are equal in the failings of their style; where Juvenal manifestly triumphs over both of them.

The comparison betwixt Horace and Juvenal is more difficult; because their forces were more equal. A dispute has always been, and ever will continue, betwixt the favourers of the two poets. *Non nostrum est tantas componere lites.*[1] I shall only venture to give my own opinion, and leave it for better judges to determine. If it be only argued in general which of them was the better poet, the victory is already gained on the side of Horace. Virgil himself must yield to him in the delicacy of his turns, his choice of words, and perhaps the purity of his Latin. He who says that Pindar is inimitable, is himself inimitable in his Odes. But the contention betwixt these two great masters is for the prize of satire; in which controversy all the Odes and Epodes of Horace are to stand excluded. I say this, because Horace has written many of them satirically, against his private enemies; yet these, if justly considered, are somewhat of the nature of the Greek *silli*, which were invectives against particular sects and persons. But Horace had purged himself of this choler before he entered on those discourses which are more properly called the Roman satire. He has not now to do with a Lyce, a Canidia, a Cassius Severus, or a Menas; but is to correct the vices and the follies of his time, and to give the rules of a happy and virtuous life. In a word, that former sort of satire, which is known in England by the name of lampoon, is a dangerous sort of weapon, and for the most part unlawful. We have no moral right on the reputation of other men. 'Tis taking from them what we cannot restore to them.[2] There are only two reasons for which

[1] Virgil, *Eclogues*, III.108 ('non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites'): 'It is not for me to settle such a debate.'

[2] Dryden's own behaviour as Court satirist a dozen years before may seem inconsistent with this rule. But it probably represents no change of heart. The two justifications he cites for writing lampoons certainly cover all he

we may be permitted to write lampoons; and I will not promise that they can always justify us. The first is revenge, when we have been affronted in the same nature, or have been any ways notoriously abused, and can make ourselves no other reparation. And yet we know that, in Christian charity, all offences are to be forgiven; as we expect the like pardon for those which we daily commit against Almighty God. And this consideration has often made me tremble when I was saying our Saviour's prayer; for the plain condition of the forgiveness which we beg is the pardoning of others the offences which they have done to us: for which reason I have many times avoided the commission of that fault, even when I have been notoriously provoked. Let not this, my Lord, pass for vanity in me; for 'tis truth. More libels have been written against me than almost any man now living; and I had reason on my side to have defended my own innocence. I speak not of my poetry, which I have wholly given up to the critics: let them use it as they please: posterity, perhaps, may be more favourable to me; for interest and passion will lie buried in another age, and partiality and prejudice be forgotten. I speak of my morals, which have been sufficiently aspersed: that only sort of reputation ought to be dear to every honest man, and is to me. But let the world witness for me that I have been often wanting to myself in that particular; I have seldom answered any scurrilous lampoon, when it was in my power to have exposed my enemies: and being naturally vindicative, have suffered in silence, and possessed my soul in quiet.

Any thing, tho' never so little, which a man speaks of himself, in my opinion, is still too much, and therefore I will waive this subject; and proceed to give the second reason which may justify a poet when he writes against a particular person: and that is when he is become a public nuisance. All those whom Horace in his Satires, and Persius and Juvenal have mentioned in theirs with a brand of infamy, are wholly such. 'Tis an action of virtue to make examples of vicious men. They may and ought to be upbraided with their crimes and follies: both for their own amendment, if they are not yet incorrigible, and for the terror of others, to hinder them from falling into those

had ever written: *Mac Flecknoe* (1682) is a classic example of the first motive (personal revenge), and *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681-2) of the second (public duty). Cf. Ian Jack, *Augustan Satire* (1952), pp. 80f.

enormities which they see are so severely punished in the persons of others. The first reason was only an excuse for revenge; but this second is absolutely of a poet's office to perform. But how few lampooners are there now living who are capable of this duty! When they come in my way, 'tis impossible sometimes to avoid reading them. But, good God, how remote they are, in common justice, from the choice of such persons as are the proper subject of satire! And how little wit they bring for the support of their injustice! The weaker sex is their most ordinary theme; and the best and fairest are sure to be the most severely handled. Amongst men, those who are prosperously unjust are entitled to a panegyric. But afflicted virtue is insolently stabbed with all manner of reproaches. No decency is considered, no fulsomeness omitted; no venom is wanting, as far as dullness can supply it. For there is a perpetual dearth of wit; a barrenness of good sense and entertainment. The neglect of the readers will soon put an end to this sort of scribbling. There can be no pleasantry where there is no wit; no impression can be made where there is no truth for the foundation. To conclude, they are like the fruits of the earth in this unnatural season: the corn which held up its head is spoiled with rankness; but the greater part of the harvest is laid along, and little of good income and wholesome nourishment is received into the barns. This is almost a digression, I confess to your Lordship; but a just indignation forced it from me. Now I have removed this rubbish, I will return to the comparison of Juvenal and Horace.

I would willingly divide the palm betwixt them, upon the two heads of profit and delight, which are the two ends of poetry in general. It must be granted by the favourers of Juvenal that Horace is the more copious and profitable in his instructions of human life. But in my particular opinion, which I set not up for a standard to better judgments, Juvenal is the more delightful author.[1] I am profited by both, I am pleased with both; but I owe more to Horace for my instruction, and more to Juvenal for my pleasure. This, as I said, is my particular taste of these two authors: they who will have either of them to excel the other in both qualities can scarce give better reasons for their

[1] This represents a reversal of opinion since the preface to *Sylvæ* (1685), where he calls Horace's satires 'incomparably beyond Juvenal's, if to laugh and rally is to be preferred to railing and declaiming.' Dryden's loss of Court favour after 1689 may have given him a taste for Juvenal.

opinion than I for mine. But all unbiassed readers will conclude that my moderation is not to be condemned. To such impartial men I must appeal; for they who have already formed their judgment may justly stand suspected of prejudice; and tho' all who are my readers will set up to be my judges, I enter my *caveat* against them, that they ought not so much as to be of my jury. Or, if they be admitted, 'tis but reason that they should first hear what I have to urge in the defence of my opinion.

That Horace is somewhat the better instructor of the two is proved from hence, that his instructions are more general, Juvenal's more limited. So that, granting that the counsels which they give are equally good for moral use, Horace, who gives the most various advice, and most applicable to all occasions which can occur to us in the course of our lives, as including in his discourse not only all the rules of morality, but also of civil conversation, is undoubtedly to be preferred to him who is more circumscribed in his instructions, makes them to fewer people, and on fewer occasions than the other. I may be pardoned for using an old saying, since 'tis true and to the purpose: *bonum quo communius, eo melius.*[1] Juvenal, excepting only his first satire, is in all the rest confined to the exposing of some particular vice; that he lashes, and there he sticks. His sentences are truly shining and instructive; but they are sprinkled here and there. Horace is teaching us in every line, and is perpetually moral; he had found out the skill of Virgil, to hide his sentences: to give you the virtue of them, without shewing them in their full extent; which is the ostentation of a poet, and not his art: and this Petronius charges on the authors of his time, as a vice of writing which was then growing on the age: *ne sententiæ extra corpus orationis emineant.*[2] He would have them weaved into the body of the work, and not appear embossed upon it, and striking directly on the reader's view. Folly was the proper quarry of Horace, and not vice; and as there are but few notoriously wicked men, in comparison with a shoal of fools and fops, so 'tis a harder thing to make a man wise than to make him honest; for the will is only to be reclaimed in the

[1] 'the more general, the better.'
[2] *Satyricon*, 118: 'Do not let maxims ['sentences'] protrude from the body of the work.'

one, but the understanding is to be informed in the other. There are blind sides and follies, even in the professors of moral philosophy; and there is not any one sect of them that Horace has not exposed: which, as it was not the design of Juvenal, who was wholly employed in lashing vices, some of them the most enormous than can be imagined; so, perhaps, it was not so much his talent.

> omne vafer vitium ridenti Flaccus amico
> tangit, et admissus circum præcordia ludit.[1]

This was the commendation which Persius gave him: where by *vitium* he means those little vices which we call follies, the defects of human understanding, or at most the peccadillos of life, rather than the tragical vices, to which men are hurried by their unruly passions and exorbitant desires. But in the word *omne*, which is *universal*, he concludes with me that the divine wit of Horace left nothing untouched; that he entered into the inmost recesses of nature; found out the imperfections even of the most wise and grave, as well as of the common people; discovering, even in the great Trebatius, to whom he addresses the first satire, his hunting after business, and following the Court, as well as in the persecutor Crispinus,[2] his impertinence and importunity. 'Tis true, he exposes Crispinus openly as a common nuisance; but he rallies the other, as a friend, more finely. The exhortations of Persius are confined to noblemen; and the Stoic philosophy is that alone which he recommends to them; Juvenal exhorts to particular virtues, as they are opposed to those vices against which he declaims; but Horace laughs to shame all follies, and insinuates virtue rather by familiar examples than by the severity of precepts.

This last consideration seems to incline the balance on the side of Horace, and to give him the preference to Juvenal, not only in profit, but in pleasure. But, after all, I must confess that

[1] Persius, *Satires*, I.116-17:

> Unlike in method, with conceal'd design,
> Did crafty Horace his low numbers join:
> And, with a sly insinuating grace,
> Laugh'd at his friend, and look'd him in the face:
> Wou'd raise a blush where secret vice he found;
> And tickle while he gently prob'd the wound.
> (Dryden's translation, ll. 231-6.)

[2] *Satires*, I.ix.

the delight which Horace gives me is but languishing. Be pleased still to understand that I speak of my own taste only: he may ravish other men; but I am too stupid and insensible to be tickled. Where he barely grins himself and, as Scaliger says, only shews his white teeth, he cannot provoke me to any laughter. His urbanity, that is, his good manners, are to be commended, but his wit is faint; and his salt, if I may dare to say so, almost insipid. Juvenal is of a more vigorous and masculine wit; he gives me as much pleasure as I can bear; he fully satisfies my expectation; he treats his subject home; his spleen is raised, and he raises mine; I have the pleasure of concernment in all he says; he drives his reader along with him; and when he is at the end of his way, I willingly stop with him. If he went another stage, it would be too far; it would make a journey of a progress, and turn delight into fatigue. When he gives over, 'tis a sign the subject is exhausted, and the wit of man can carry it no farther. If a fault can be justly found in him, 'tis that he is sometimes too luxuriant, too redundant; says more than he needs, like my friend the Plain Dealer,[1] but never more than pleases. Add to this that his thoughts are as just as those of Horace, and much more elevated. His expressions are sonorous and more noble; his verse more numerous, and his words are suitable to his thoughts, sublime and lofty. All these contribute to the pleasure of the reader, and the greater the soul of him who reads, his transports are the greater. Horace is always on the amble, Juvenal on the gallop; but his way is perpetually on carpet ground.[2] He goes with more impetuosity than Horace; but as securely; and the swiftness adds a more lively agitation to the spirits. The low style of Horace is according to his subject, that is, generally grovelling. I question not but he could have raised it. For the first epistle of the Second Book, which he writes to Augustus (a most instructive satire concerning poetry) is of so much dignity in the words, and of so much elegancy in the numbers, that the author plainly shews the *sermo pedestris*[3] in his other satires was rather his choice than his necessity. He was a rival to Lucilius, his predecessor, and was resolved to surpass him in his own manner. Lucilius, as we see by his

[1] In Wycherley's comedy (1677).
[2] Cf. preface to *Sylvæ*, p. 22n., above.
[3] Horace, *Ars poetica*, l. 95: 'pedestrian style.'

remaining fragments, minded neither his style nor his numbers, nor his purity of words, nor his run of verse. Horace therefore copes with him in that humble way of satire, writes under his own force, and carries a dead weight, that he may match his competitor in the race. This, I imagine, was the chief reason why he minded only the clearness of his satire, and the cleanness of expression, without ascending to those heights to which his own vigour might have carried him. But limiting his desires only to the conquest of Lucilius, he had his ends of his rival who lived before him; but made way for a new conquest over himself by Juvenal, his successor. He could not give an equal pleasure to his reader, because he used not equal instruments. The fault was in the tools, and not in the workman. But versification and numbers are the greatest pleasures of poetry: Virgil knew it, and practised both so happily that, for aught I know, his greatest excellency is in his diction. In all other parts of poetry, he is faultless; but in this he placed his chief perfection. And give me leave, my Lord, since I have here an apt occasion, to say that Virgil could have written sharper satires than either Horace or Juvenal, if he would have employed his talent that way. I will produce a verse and half of his, in one of his Eclogues, to justify my opinion; and with commas after every word, to shew that he has given almost as many lashes as he has written syllables. 'Tis against a bad poet, whose ill verses he describes:

non tu, in triviis, indocte, solebas
stridenti miserum stipula disperdere carmen?[1]

But to return to my purpose: when there is any thing deficient in numbers and sound, the reader is uneasy and unsatisfied; he wants something of his complement, desires somewhat which he finds not: and this being the manifest defect of Horace, 'tis no wonder that, finding it supplied in Juvenal, we are more delighted with him. And besides this, the sauce of Juvenal is more poignant, to create in us an appetite of reading him. The meat of Horace is more nourishing; but the cookery of Juvenal more exquisite; so that, granting Horace to be the more general philosopher, we cannot deny that Juvenal was the greater poet, I mean in satire. His thoughts are sharper; his indignation

[1] *Eclogues*, III.26-7: 'Was it not you, you ass, who at the cross-roads used to murder a miserable song on a pipe?'

against vice is more vehement; his spirit has more of the commonwealth genius;[1] he treats tyranny, and all the vices attending it, as they deserve, with the utmost rigour: and consequently, a noble soul is better pleased with a zealous vindicator of Roman liberty than with a temporizing poet, a well-mannered Court slave, and a man who is often afraid of laughing in the right place; who is ever decent, because he is naturally servile. After all, Horace had the disadvantage of the times in which he lived; they were better for the man, but worse for the satirist. 'Tis generally said that those enormous vices which were practised under the reign of Domitian[2] were unknown in the time of Augustus Cæsar; that therefore Juvenal had a larger field than Horace. Little follies were out of doors when oppression was to be scourged instead of avarice: it was no longer time to turn into ridicule the false opinions of philosophers, when the Roman liberty was to be asserted. There was more need of a Brutus in Domitian's days, to redeem or mend, than of a Horace, if he had then been living, to laugh at a fly-catcher. This reflection at the same time excuses Horace, but exalts Juvenal. I have ended, before I was aware, the comparison of Horace and Juvenal, upon the topics of instruction and delight; and, indeed, I may safely here conclude that commonplace; for, if we make Horace our minister of state in satire, and Juvenal of our private pleasures, I think the latter has no ill bargain of it. Let profit have the pre-eminence of honour, in the end of poetry. Pleasure, though but the second in degree, is the first in favour. And who would not choose to be loved better, rather than to be more esteemed? But I am entered already upon another topic, which concerns the particular merits of these two satirists. However, I will pursue my business where I left it, and carry it farther than that common observation of the several ages in which these authors flourished.

When Horace writ his satires, the monarchy of his Cæsar was in its newness, and the government but just made easy to the conquered people. They could not possibly have forgotten the usurpation of that prince upon their freedom, nor the violent methods which he had used in the compassing that vast design:

[1] I.e. more political concern.

[2] In fact the Flavian dynasty, under which Juvenal lived, was remarkably prudish, and in reaction against the excesses of the Julio-Claudian dynasty in the age of Horace.

they yet remembered his proscriptions, and the slaughter of so many noble Romans, their defenders: amongst the rest, that horrible action of his, when he forced Livia from the arms of her husband, who was constrained to see her married, as Dion relates the story, and, big with child as she was, conveyed to the bed of his insulting rival.[1] The same Dion Cassius gives us another instance of the crime before mentioned; that Cornelius Sisenna, being reproached in full Senate with the licentious conduct of his wife, returned this answer: that he had married her by the counsel of Augustus; intimating, says my author, that Augustus had obliged him to that marriage that he might, under that covert, have the more free access to her. His adulteries were still before their eyes: but they must be patient where they had not power. In other things that emperor was moderate enough: propriety was generally secured; and the people entertained with public shows and donatives, to make them more easily digest their lost liberty. But Augustus, who was conscious to himself of so many crimes which he had committed, thought in the first place to provide for his own reputation by making an edict against lampoons and satires, and the authors of those defamatory writings which my author Tacitus, from the law-term, calls *famosos libellos*.

In the first book of his *Annals*, he gives the following account of it, in these words: *primus Augustus cognitionem de famosis libellis, specie legis ejus, tractavit; commotus Cassii Severi libidine, qua viros fœminasque inlustris procacibus scriptis diffamaverat.*[2] Thus in English: Augustus was the first who under the colour of that law took cognisance of lampoons; being provoked to it by the petulancy of Cassius Severus, who had defamed many illustrious persons of both sexes in his writings. The law to which Tacitus refers was *Lex læsæ majestatis*; commonly called, for the sake of brevity, *majestas*; or, as we say, high treason. He means not that this law had not been enacted formerly: for it had been made by the Decemviri, and was inscribed amongst the rest in the Twelve Tables: to prevent the aspersion of the Roman Majesty, either of the people themselves, or their religion, or their magistrates: and the infringement of it was capital; that is, the offender was whipped to death with the *fasces*, which were borne before their chief officers of Rome.

[1] Cassius Dio, LIV.27.

[2] Tacitus, *Annals*, I.72.

But Augustus was the first who restored that intermitted law. By the words *under colour of that law*, he insinuates that Augustus caused it to be executed on pretence of those libels, which were written by Cassius Severus, against the nobility; but, in truth, to save himself from such defamatory verses. Suetonius likewise makes mention of it thus: *sparsos de se in curia famosos libellos, nec expavit, et magna cura redarguit: ac ne requisitis quidem auctoribus, id modo censuit, cognoscendum posthac de iis qui libellos aut carmina ad infamiam cujuspiam sub alieno nomine edant.*[1] Augustus was not afraid of libels, says that author; yet he took all care imaginable to have them answered; and then decreed that for the time to come the authors of them should be punished. But Aurelius makes it yet more clear, according to my sense, that this emperor for his own sake durst not permit them: *fecit id Augustus in speciem, ut quasi gratificaretur populo romano, et primoribus urbis; sed revera ut sibi consuleret: nam habuit in animo, comprimere nimiam quorundam procacitatem in loquendo, a qua nec ipse exemptus fuit. nam suo nomine compescere erat invidiosum, sub alieno facile et utile. ergo specie legis tractavit, quasi populi romani majestas infamaretur.*[2] This, I think, is a sufficient comment on that passage of Tacitus. I will add only by the way that the whole family of the Cæsars, and all their relations, were included in the law; because the majesty of the Romans, in the time of the empire, was wholly in that house; *omnia Cæsar erat*: they were all accounted sacred who belonged to him. As for Cassius Severus, he was contemporary with Horace; and was the same poet against whom he writes in his Epodes under this title, *In Cassium Severum maledicum poetam*;[3] perhaps intending to kill two crows, according to our proverb, with one stone, and revenge both himself and his emperor together.

From hence I may reasonably conclude that Augustus, who was not altogether so good as he was wise, had some by-respect in the enacting of this law: for to do any thing for nothing was not his maxim. Horace, as he was a courtier, complied with the interest of his master; and, avoiding the lashing of greater crimes, confined himself to the ridiculing of petty vices, and

[1] Suetonius, 'Augustus Caesar,' LV.
[2] Not in Sextus Aurelius Victor (4th century A.D.)—probably from a Renaissance commentary.
[3] Horace, Epode VI.

common follies; excepting only some reserved cases, in his Odes and Epodes, of his own particular quarrels, which either with permission of the magistrate, or without it, every man will revenge, tho' I say not that he should; for *prior læsit* is a good excuse in the civil law, if Christianity had not taught us to forgive. However, he was not the proper man to arraign great vices, at least if the stories which we hear of him are true, that he practised some which I will not here mention, out of honour to him. It was not for a Clodius to accuse adulterers, especially when Augustus was of that number; so that though his age was not exempted from the worst of villanies, there was no freedom left to reprehend them, by reason of the edict. And our poet was not fit to represent them in an odious character, because himself was dipped in the same actions. Upon this account, without farther insisting on the different tempers of Juvenal and Horace, I conclude that the subjects which Horace chose for satire are of a lower nature than those of which Juvenal has written.

Thus I have treated, in a new method, the comparison betwixt Horace, Juvenal, and Persius; somewhat of their particular manner belonging to all of them is yet remaining to be considered. Persius was grave, and particularly opposed his gravity to lewdness, which was the predominant vice in Nero's Court at the time when he published his satires, which was before that emperor fell into the excess of cruelty. Horace was a mild admonisher, a Court satirist, fit for the gentle times of Augustus, and more fit for the reasons which I have already given. Juvenal was as proper for his times as they for theirs. His was an age that deserved a more severe chastisement. Vices were more gross and open, more flagitious, more encouraged by the example of a tyrant, and more protected by his authority. Therefore, wheresoever Juvenal mentions Nero, he means Domitian, whom he dares not attack in his own person, but scourges him by proxy. Heinsius urges in praise of Horace that, according to the ancient art and law of satire, it should be nearer to comedy than to tragedy; not declaiming against vice, but only laughing at it. Neither Persius nor Juvenal were ignorant of this, for they had both studied Horace. And the thing itself is plainly true. But as they had read Horace, they had likewise read Lucilius, of whom Persius says *secuit urbem;*

et genuinum fregit in illis; meaning Mutius and Lupus. And Juvenal also mentions him in these words: *ense velut stricto, quoties Lucilius ardens infremuit*, etc.[1] So that they thought the imitation of Lucilius was more proper to their purpose than that of Horace. They changed satire, says Holyday, but they changed it for the better; for the business being to reform great vices, chastisement goes farther than admonition; whereas a perpetual grin, like that of Horace, does rather anger than amend a man.[2]

Thus far that learned critic, Barten Holyday, whose interpretation and illustrations of Juvenal are as excellent as the verse of his translation and his English are lame and pitiful. For 'tis not enough to give us the meaning of a poet, which I acknowledge him to have performed most faithfully, but he must also imitate his genius and his numbers, as far as the English will come up to the elegance of the original. In few words, 'tis only for a poet to translate a poet. Holyday and Stapylton had not enough considered this when they attempted Juvenal. But I forbear reflections; only I beg leave to take notice of this sentence, where Holyday says, 'a perpetual grin, like that of Horace, rather angers than amends a man.' I cannot give him up the manner of Horace in low satire so easily. Let the chastisements of Juvenal be never so necessary for his new kind of satire; let him declaim as wittily and sharply as he pleases: yet still the nicest and most delicate touches of satire consist in fine raillery. This, my Lord, is your particular talent, to which even Juvenal could not arrive. 'Tis not reading, 'tis not imitation of an author, which can produce this fineness:[3] it must be inborn; it must proceed from a genius, and particular way of thinking, which is not to be taught; and therefore not to be imitated by him who has it not from nature. How easy is it to call rogue and villain, and that wittily! But how hard to make a man appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave, without using any of those

[1] Persius, I.114-15; Juvenal, I.165-6: 'Lucilius lashed the town, and chewed them up'; 'when Lucilius passionately rages, as if with drawn sword.'

[2] Holyday (1673), 'The Preface to the Reader': 'For what is the end of satire but to reform? whereas a perpetual grin does rather anger than mend.'

[3] This passage on 'fine raillery' is Dryden's most extended critical comment on the art in which he most excelled. But it seems as much an aspiration as a description: Dryden's own satires are more public, more political, and more abusive, than this ideal account might suggest.

opprobrious terms! To spare the grossness of the names, and to do the thing yet more severely, is to draw a full face, and to make the nose and cheeks stand out, and yet not to employ any depth of shadowing. This is the mystery of that noble trade, which yet no master can teach to his apprentice: he may give the rules, but the scholar is never the nearer in his practice. Neither is it true that this fineness of raillery is offensive. A witty man is tickled while he is hurt in this manner, and a fool feels it not. The occasion of an offence may possibly be given, but he cannot take it. If it be granted that in effect this way does more mischief; that a man is secretly wounded, and though he be not sensible himself, yet the malicious world will find it for him: yet there is still a vast difference betwixt the slovenly butchering of a man, and the fineness of a stroke that separates the head from the body, and leaves it standing in its place. A man may be capable, as Jack Ketch's[1] wife said of his servant, of a plain piece of work, a bare hanging; but to make a malefactor die sweetly was only belonging to her husband. I wish I could apply it to myself, if the reader would be kind enough to think it belongs to me. The character of Zimri[2] in my *Absalom* is, in my opinion, worth the whole poem: 'tis not bloody, but 'tis ridiculous enough. And he for whom it was intended was too witty to resent it as an injury. If I had railed, I might have suffered for it justly: but I managed my own work more happily, perhaps more dexterously. I avoided the mention of great crimes, and applied myself to the representing of blindsides, and little extravagancies; to which, the wittier a man is, he is generally the more obnoxious. It succeeded as I wished; the jest went round, and he was laughed at in his turn who began the frolic.

And thus, my Lord, you see I have preferred the manner of Horace, and of your Lordship, in this kind of satire, to that of Juvenal; and I think reasonably. Holyday ought not to have arraigned so great an author for that which was his excellency and his merit: or if he did, on such a palpable mistake, he might expect that some one might possibly arise, either in his own

[1] John Ketch (d. 1686), the barbarous public hangman employed by Charles II and James II. He may have recommended himself to Dryden by his butcherly treatment of Titus Oates and his fellows and, later, of the Duke of Monmouth. Cf. p. 211, below.

[2] *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), ll. 544-64—an attack upon the second Duke of Buckingham.

time, or after him, to rectify his error, and restore to Horace that commendation of which he has so unjustly robbed him. And let the *Manes* of Juvenal forgive me if I say that this way of Horace was the best for amending manners, as it is the most difficult. His was an *ense rescindendum*;[1] but that of Horace was a pleasant cure, with all the limbs preserved entire; and as our mountebanks tell us in their bills, without keeping the patient within doors for a day. What they promise only, Horace has effectually performed. Yet I contradict not the proposition which I formerly advanced: Juvenal's times required a more painful kind of operation; but if he had lived in the age of Horace, I must needs affirm that he had it not about him. He took the method which was prescribed him by his own genius, which was sharp and eager; he could not rally, but he could declaim; and as his provocations were great, he has revenged them tragically. This notwithstanding, I am to say another word which, as true as it is, will yet displease the partial admirers of our Horace. I have hinted it before; but 'tis time for me now to speak more plainly.

This manner of Horace is indeed the best; but Horace has not executed it altogether so happily, at least not often. The manner of Juvenal is confessed to be inferior to the former; but Juvenal has excelled him in his performance. Juvenal has railed more wittily than Horace has rallied. Horace means to make his reader laugh, but he is not sure of his experiment. Juvenal always intends to move your indignation; and he always brings about his purpose. Horace, for aught I know, might have tickled the people of his age; but amongst the Moderns he is not so successful. They who say he entertains so pleasantly may perhaps value themselves on the quickness of their own understandings, that they can see a jest farther off than other men. They may find occasion of laughter in the wit-battle of the two buffoons, Sarmentus and Cicerrus;[2] and hold their sides for fear of bursting, when Rupilius and Persius are scolding.[3] For my own part, I can only like the characters of all four, which are judiciously given; but for my heart I cannot so much as smile at their insipid raillery. I see not why Persius should call upon Brutus to revenge him on his adversary; and that because he

[1] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I.191: 'hacking with the sword.'
[2] Horace, *Satires*, I.v.51f. [3] *Ibid.*, I.vii.

had killed Julius Cæsar, for endeavouring to be a king, therefore he should be desired to murther Rupilius, only because his name was Mr King. A miserable clench, in my opinion, for Horace to record: I have heard honest Mr Swan[1] make many a better, and yet have had the grace to hold my countenance. But it may be puns were then in fashion, as they were wit in the sermons of the last age, and in the Court of King Charles the Second. I am sorry to say it, for the sake of Horace; but certain it is, he has no fine palate who can feed so heartily on garbage.

But I have already wearied myself, and doubt not but I have tired your Lordship's patience, with this long, rambling, and, I fear, trivial discourse. Upon the one half of the merits, that is, pleasure, I cannot but conclude that Juvenal was the better satirist. They who will descend into his particular praises, may find them at large in the Dissertation of the learned Rigaltius to Thuanus. As for Persius, I have given the reasons why I think him inferior to both of them. Yet I have one thing to add on that subject.

Barten Holyday, who translated both Juvenal and Persius, has made this distinction betwixt them, which is no less true than witty; that in Persius the difficulty is to find a meaning, in Juvenal to choose a meaning; so crabbed is Persius, and so copious is Juvenal; so much the understanding is employed in one, and so much the judgment in the other; so difficult it is to find any sense in the former, and the best sense of the latter.

If, on the other side, any one suppose I have commended Horace below his merit, when I have allowed him but the second place, I desire him to consider if Juvenal, a man of excellent natural endowments, besides the advantages of diligence and study, and coming after him, and building upon his foundations, might not probably, with all these helps, surpass him? And whether it be any dishonour to Horace to be thus surpassed, since no art or science is at once begun and perfected, but that it must pass first through many hands, and even through several ages? If Lucilius could add to Ennius, and Horace to Lucilius, why, without any diminution to the fame of Horace, might not Juvenal give the last perfection to that work? Or

[1] Richard Swan, a notorious punster of the age. A letter from Swan to Dryden, probably written in the 1690's, has survived to suggest how unfunny his puns were (*Ward*, no. 76).

rather, what disreputation is it to Horace that Juvenal excels in the tragical satire, as Horace does in the comical? I have read over attentively both Heinsius and Dacier, in their commendations of Horace; but I can find no more in either of them for the preference of him to Juvenal, than the instructive part: the part of wisdom, and not that of pleasure which therefore, is here allowed him, notwithstanding what Scaliger and Rigaltius have pleaded to the contrary for Juvenal. And to shew I am impartial, I will here translate what Dacier has said on that subject.

I cannot give a more just idea of the two books of satires made by Horace than by comparing them to the statues of the Sileni, to which Alcibiades compares Socrates in the *Symposium*.[1] They were figures which had nothing of agreeable, nothing of beauty, on their outside; but when any one took the pains to open them, and search into them, he there found the figures of all the deities. So, in the shape that Horace presents himself to us in his satires, we see nothing at the first view which deserves our attention. It seems that he is rather an amusement for children than for the serious consideration of men. But when we take away his crust, and that which hides him from our sight, when we discover him to the bottom, then we find all the divinities in a full assembly: that is to say, all the virtues which ought to be the continual exercise of those who seriously endeavour to correct their vices.

'Tis easy to observe that Dacier, in this noble similitude, has confined the praise of his author wholly to the instructive part: the commendation turns on this, and so does that which follows.

In these two books of satire, 'tis the business of Horace to instruct us how to combat our vices, to regulate our passions, to follow nature, to give bounds to our desires, to distinguish betwixt truth and falsehood, and betwixt our conceptions of things, and things themselves; to come back from our prejudicate opinions, to understand exactly the principles and motives of all our actions; and to avoid the ridicule into which all men necessarily fall who are intoxicated with those notions, which they have received from their masters, and which they obstinately retain, without examining whether or no they are founded on right reason.

In a word, he labours to render us happy in relation to

[1] Plato, *Symposium* 215.

ourselves; agreeable and faithful to our friends; and discreet, serviceable, and well bred in relation to those with whom we are obliged to live and to converse. To make his figures intelligible, to conduct his readers through the labyrinth of some perplexed sentence, or obscure parenthesis, is no great matter. And as Epictetus says, there is nothing of beauty in all this, or what is worthy of a prudent man. The principal business, and which is of most importance to us, is to shew the use, the reason, and the proof of his precepts.

They who endeavour not to correct themselves according to so exact a model, are just like the patients who have open before them a book of admirable receipts for their diseases, and please themselves with reading it, without comprehending the nature of the remedies, or how to apply them to their cure.

Let Horace go off with these encomiums, which he has so well deserved.

To conclude the contention betwixt our three poets, I will use the words of Virgil, in his fifth Æneid, where Æneas proposes the rewards of the foot-race to the three first who should reach the goal:

> tres præmia primi
> accipient, flavaque caput nectentur oliva.

Let these three Ancients be preferred to all the Moderns, as first arriving at the goal; let them all be crowned as victors, with the wreath that properly belongs to satire. But after that, with this distinction amongst themselves:

> primus equum phaleris insignem victor habeto

Let Juvenal ride first in triumph:

> alter Amazoniam pharetram, plenamque sagittis
> Threiciis, lato quam circumplectitur auro
> balteus, et tereti subnectit fibula gemma.[1]

[1] *Aeneid*, V.308-9:

> The foremost three have olive wreaths decreed;
> The first of these obtains a stately steed
> Adorn'd with trappings; and the next in fame,
> The quiver of an Amazonian dame,
> With feather'd Thracian arrows well supply'd,
> A golden belt shall gird his manly side,
> Which with a sparkling diamond shall be ty'd;
> The third this Grecian helmet shall content.
> (Dryden's version, V.405-12.)

Let Horace, who is the second, and but just the second, carry off the quivers and the arrows; as the badges of his satire, and the golden belt, and the diamond button:

tertius Argolico hoc clypeo contentus abito.

And let Persius, the last of the first three worthies, be contented with this Grecian shield, and with victory not only over all the Grecians, who were ignorant of the Roman satire, but over all the Moderns in succeeding ages; excepting Boileau and your Lordship.

And thus I have given the history of satire, and derived it as far as from Ennius to your Lordship; that is, from its first rudiments of barbarity to its last polishing and perfection; which is, with Virgil, in his address to Augustus:

nomen fama tot ferre per annos,
Tithoni prima quot abest ab origine Cæsar.[1]

I said, only from Ennius; but I may safely carry it higher, as far as Livius Andronicus; who, as I have said formerly, taught the first play at Rome, in the year *ab urbe condita* 514. I have since desired my learned friend, Mr Maidwell,[2] to compute the difference of times betwixt Aristophanes and Livius Andronicus; and he assures me, from the best chronologers, that *Plutus*, the last of Aristophanes his plays, was represented at Athens in the year of the 97th Olympiad; which agrees with the year *urbis conditæ* 364: so that the difference of years betwixt Aristophanes and Andronicus is 150; from whence I have probably deduced that Livius Andronicus, who was a Grecian, had read the plays of the Old Comedy, which were satirical, and also of the New; for Menander was fifty years before him, which must needs be a great light to him in his own plays, that were of the satirical nature. That the Romans had farces before this, 'tis true; but then they had no communication with Greece; so that Andronicus was the first who wrote after the manner of the Old Comedy in his plays: he was imitated by Ennius, about thirty years afterwards. Though the former writ fables, the latter, speaking properly, began the Roman satire; according to that description which Juvenal gives of it in his first:

[1] *Georgics*, III.47-8: 'to bear his name in renown through as many years as Caesar stands from the far-off birth of Tithonus.'
[2] Lewis Maidwell (1650-1715), a schoolmaster and grammarian.

> quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
> gaudia, discursus, nostri est farrago libelli.[1]

This is that in which I have made bold to differ from Casaubon, Rigaltius, Dacier, and indeed from all the modern critics, that not Ennius, but Andronicus was the first who, by the *Archæa Comedia* of the Greeks, added many beauties to the first rude and barbarous Roman satire: which sort of poem, tho' we had not derived from Rome, yet nature teaches it mankind in all ages, and in every country.

'Tis but necessary that after so much has been said of satire, some definition of it should be given. Heinsius, in his dissertations on Horace, makes it for me in these words: 'Satire is a kind of poetry, without a series of action, invented for the purging of our minds; in which human vices, ignorance, and errors, and all things besides, which are produced from them in every man, are severely reprehended; partly dramatically, partly simply, and sometimes in both kinds of speaking; but for the most part figuratively, and occultly; consisting in a low familiar way, chiefly in a sharp and pungent manner of speech; but partly, also, in a facetious and civil way of jesting; by which either hatred, or laughter, or indignation, is moved.'—Where I cannot but observe that this obscure and perplexed definition, or rather description, of satire, is wholly accommodated to the Horatian way; and excluding the works of Juvenal and Persius, as foreign from that kind of poem. The clause in the beginning of it (*without a series of action*) distinguishes satire properly from stage-plays, which are all of one action, and one continued series of action. The end or scope of satire is to purge the passions; so far it is common to the satires of Juvenal and Persius. The rest which follows is also generally belonging to all three; till he comes upon us, with the excluding clause (*consisting in a low familiar way of speech*), which is the proper character of Horace; and from which the other two, for their honour be it spoken, are far distant. But how come lowness of style, and the familiarity of words, to be so much the propriety of satire, that without them a poet can be no more a satirist than without risibility he can be a man? Is the fault of Horace to be made the virtue and standing rule of this poem? Is the *grande sophos*[2] of Persius, and the

[1] *Satires*, I.85-6: 'Whatever men do—their vows, fears, anger, desire, joys, movements—all this is the motley subject of my book.'

[2] 'the high wisdom'—the phrase is used by Rigaltius, *op. cit.*

sublimity of Juvenal, to be circumscribed with the meanness of words and vulgarity of expression? If Horace refused the pains of numbers, and the loftiness of figures, are they bound to follow so ill a precedent? Let him walk afoot with his pad[1] in his hand, for his own pleasure; but let not them be accounted no poets who choose to mount, and shew their horsemanship. Holyday is not afraid to say that there was never such a fall as from his Odes to his Satires, and that he, injuriously to himself, untuned his harp.[2] The majestic way of Persius and Juvenal was new when they began it, but 'tis old to us; and what poems have not with time, received an alteration in their fashion? Which alteration, says Holyday, is to aftertimes as good a warrant as the first. Has not Virgil changed the manners of Homer's heroes in his *Æneis*? Certainly he has, and for the better. For Virgil's age was more civilized, and better bred; and he writ according to the politeness of Rome, under the reign of Augustus Cæsar, not to the rudeness of Agamemnon's age, or the times of Homer. Why should we offer to confine free spirits to one form, when we cannot so much as confine our bodies to one fashion of apparel? Would not Donne's satires, which abound with so much wit, appear more charming if he had taken care of his words, and of his numbers? But he followed Horace so very close that of necessity he must fall with him. And I may safely say it of this present age, that if we are not so great wits as Donne, yet certainly we are better poets.

But I have said enough, and it may be too much, on this subject. Will your Lordship be pleased to prolong my audience, only so far till I tell you my own trivial thoughts how a modern satire should be made? I will not deviate in the least from the precepts and examples of the Ancients, who were always our best masters. I will only illustrate them, and discover some of the hidden beauties in their designs, that we thereby may form our own in imitation of them. Will you please but to observe that Persius, the least in dignity of all the three, has notwithstanding been the first who has discovered to us this important secret in

[1] I.e. saddle.

[2] In Holyday's translation of Horace's odes (1653), 'To the Reader': 'The translator of these [odes] had rather teach virtue to the modest than discover vice to the dissolute. The streams of Helicon are goodness from these purer fountains, clear and crystalline. Drink thou.'

the designing of a perfect satire: that it ought only to treat of one subject; to be confined to one particular theme; or at least, to one principally. If other vices occur in the management of the chief, they should only be transiently lashed, and not be insisted on so as to make the design double. As in a play of the English fashion, which we call a tragi-comedy, there is to be but one main design; and tho' there be an under-plot, or second walk of comical characters and adventures, yet they are subservient to the chief fable, carried along under it, and helping to it; so that the drama may not seem a monster with two heads. Thus the Copernican system of the planets makes the moon to be moved by the motion of the earth, and carried about her orb, as a dependent of hers. Mascardi, in his discourse of the *doppia favola*,[1] or double tale in plays, gives an instance of it in the famous pastoral of Guarini called *Il Pastor Fido*; where Corisca and the Satyr are the under-parts: yet we may observe that Corisca is brought into the body of the plot, and made subservient to it. 'Tis certain that the divine wit of Horace was not ignorant of this rule, that a play, though it consists of many parts, must yet be one in the action, and must drive on the accomplishment of one design; for he gives this very precept *sit quodvis simplex duntaxat et unum*;[2] yet he seems not much to mind it in his Satires, many of them consisting of more arguments than one; and the second without dependence on the first. Casaubon has observed this before me, in his preference of Persius to Horace; and will have his own beloved author to be the first who found out and introduced this method of confining himself to one subject. I know it may be urged in defence of Horace that this unity is not necessary; because the very word *satura* signifies a dish plentifully stored with all variety of fruits and grains. Yet Juvenal, who calls his poems a *farrago*, which is a word of the same signification with *satura*, has chosen to follow the same method of Persius, and not of Horace. And Boileau, whose example alone is a sufficient authority, has wholly confined himself, in all his satires, to this unity of design. That variety which is not to be found in any one satire is, at least, in many written on several occasions. And if variety

[1] Agostino Mascardi (1590-1640), the Italian Jesuit scholar, *Prose vulgari* (1630), 'Discorso settimo: dell'unità della favola drammatica.'

[2] *Ars poetica*, l. 23: 'let your aim be what it will, so long as it is single and one.'

be of absolute necessity in every one of them, according to the etymology of the word, yet it may arise naturally from one subject, as it is diversely treated, in the several subordinate branches of it, all relating to the chief. It may be illustrated accordingly with variety of examples in the subdivisions of it, and with as many precepts as there are members of it; which altogether may complete that *olla*, or hotchpotch, which is properly a satire.

Under this unity of theme, or subject, is comprehended another rule for perfecting the design of true satire. The poet is bound, and that *ex officio*, to give his reader some one precept of moral virtue, and to caution him against some one particular vice or folly. Other virtues, subordinate to the first, may be recommended under that chief head; and other vices or follies may be scourged besides that which he principally intends. But he is chiefly to inculcate one virtue, and insist on that. Thus Juvenal, in every satire excepting the first, ties himself to one principal instructive point, or to the shunning of moral evil. Even in the sixth, which seems only an arraignment of the whole sex of womankind, there is a latent admonition to avoid ill women, by shewing how very few who are virtuous and good are to be found amongst them. But this, tho' the wittiest of all his satires, has yet the least of truth or instruction in it. He has run himself into his old declamatory way, and almost forgotten that he was now setting up for a moral poet.

Persius is never wanting to us in some profitable doctrine, and in exposing the opposite vices to it. His kind of philosophy is one, which is the Stoic; and every satire is a comment on one particular dogma of that sect; unless we will except the first, which is against bad writers; and yet even there he forgets not the precepts of the Porch. In general, all virtues are everywhere to be praised and recommended to practice; and all vices to be reprehended, and made either odious or ridiculous; or else there is a fundamental error in the whole design.

I have already declared who are the only persons that are the adequate object of private satire, and who they are that may properly be exposed by name for public examples of vices and follies; and therefore I will trouble your Lordship no farther with them. Of the best and finest manner of satire, I have said enough in the comparison betwixt Juvenal and Horace: 'tis

that sharp, well-mannered way of laughing a folly out of countenance, of which your Lordship is the best master in this age. I will proceed to the versification, which is most proper for it, and add somewhat to what I have said already on that subject. The sort of verse which is called *burlesque*,[1] consisting of eight syllables, or four feet, is that which our excellent *Hudibras*[2] has chosen. I ought to have mentioned him before, when I spoke of Donne; but by a slip of an old man's memory he was forgotten. The worth of his poem is too well known to need my commendation, and he is above my censure. His satire is of the Varronian kind, though unmixed with prose. The choice of his numbers is suitable enough to his design, as he has managed it; but in any other hand, the shortness of his verse, and the quick returns of rhyme, had debased the dignity of style. And besides, the double rhyme (a necessary companion of burlesque writing) is not so proper for manly satire; for it turns earnest too much to jest, and gives us a boyish kind of pleasure. It tickles awkwardly with a kind of pain, to the best sort of readers: we are pleased ungratefully and, if I may say so, against our liking. We thank him not for giving us that unseasonable delight, when we know he could have given us a better, and more solid. He might have left that task to others who, not being able to put in thought, can only make us grin with the excrescence of a word of two or three syllables in the close. 'Tis, indeed, below so great a master to make use of such a little instrument. But his good sense is perpetually shining through all he writes; it affords us not the time of finding faults. We pass through the levity of his rhyme, and are immediately carried into some admirable, useful thought. After all, he has chosen this kind of verse, and has written the best in it: and had he taken another, he would always have excelled; as we say of a Court favourite that whatsoever his office be, he still makes it uppermost, and most beneficial to himself.

The quickness of your imagination, my Lord, has already prevented me; and you know beforehand that I would prefer the verse of ten syllables, which we call the English heroic, to that of eight. This is truly my opinion. For this sort of number is more roomy. The thought can turn itself with greater ease in a larger compass. When the rhyme comes too thick upon us,

[1] Cf. p. 103n., above. [2] Samuel Butler (1612-80), *Hudibras* (1663-78).

it straightens[1] the expression; we are thinking of the close, when we should be employed in adorning the thought. It makes a poet giddy with turning in a space too narrow for his imagination. He loses many beauties without gaining one advantage. For a burlesque rhyme[2] I have already concluded to be none; or if it were, 'tis more easily purchased in ten syllables than in eight. In both occasions 'tis as in a tennis-court, when the strokes of greater force are given when we strike out and play at length. Tassone and Boileau have left us the best examples of this way, in the *Secchia rapita* and the *Lutrin*; and next them Merlin Coccaius in his *Baldus*.[3] I will speak only of the two former, because the last is written in Latin verse. The *Secchia rapita* is an Italian poem, a satire of the Varronian kind. 'Tis written in the stanza of eight,[4] which is their measure for heroic verse. The words are stately, the numbers smooth, the turn both of thoughts and words is happy. The first six lines of the stanza seem majestical and severe: but the two last turn them all into a pleasant ridicule. Boileau, if I am not much deceived, has modelled from hence his famous *Lutrin*. He had read the burlesque poetry of Scarron[5] with some kind of indignation, as witty as it was, and found nothing in France that was worthy of his imitation. But he copied the Italian so well that his own may pass for an original. He writes it in the French heroic verse, and calls it an heroic poem: his subject is trivial, but his verse is noble. I doubt not but he had Virgil in his eye, for we find many admirable imitations of him, and some parodies; as particularly this passage in the fourth of the *Æneids*:

> nec tibi diva parens, generis nec Dardanus auctor,
> perfide; sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens
> Caucasus; Hyrcanæque admorunt ubera tigres.[6]

[1] 'streightens,' *1693*. Ker emends to 'straitens,' i.e. narrows, contracts.

[2] I.e. a rhyme suited to 'burlesque' metre, a 'double' rhyme, or one of more than one syllable.

[3] Alessandro Tassoni (1565-1635), *La secchia rapita* (1622); Coccaius (or Teofilo Folengo) (*c.* 1496-1554), *Poema macaronicum de gestis Baldi* (1517). Boileau's *Lutrin* (1674-83), of course, was Dryden's chief modern source for his own satires, especially for *Mac Flecknoe* (1682).

[4] I.e. *ottava rima*. The expression 'octave rhyme' is used in the preface to the *Fables*, p. 271, below—perhaps for the first time in England.

[5] Paul Scarron (1610-60), *Virgile travesti* (1648-59). Cf. *L'art poétique*, I.79f.

[6] *Aeneid*, IV.365-7, parodied in the second book of *Le lutrin*, below.

Which he thus translates, keeping to the words, but altering the sense:

> Non, ton père à Paris ne fut point boulanger:
> Et tu n'es point du sang de Gervais l'horloger;
> Ta mère ne fut point la maîtresse d'un coche:
> Caucase dans ses flancs te forma d'une roche:
> Une tigresse affreuse, en quelque antre écarté,
> Te fit, avec son lait, sucer sa cruauté.

And, as Virgil in his fourth Georgic of the Bees, perpetually raises the lowness of his subject by the loftiness of his words, and ennobles it by comparisons drawn from empires, and from monarchs:

> admiranda tibi levium spectacula rerum,
> magnanimosque duces, totiusque ordine gentis
> mores et studia, et populos, et prœlia dicam;

and again:

> sed genus immortale manet; multosque per annos
> stat fortuna domus, et avi numerantur avorum;[1]

we see Boileau pursuing him in the same flights; and scarcely yielding to his master. This, I think, my Lord, to be the most beautiful and most noble kind of satire. Here is the majesty of the heroic, finely mixed with the venom of the other; and raising the delight which otherwise would be flat and vulgar, by the sublimity of the expression. I could say, somewhat more of the delicacy of this and some other of his satires; but it might turn to his prejudice if 'twere carried back to France.[2]

I have given your Lordship but this bare hint, in what verse and in what manner this sort of satire may be best managed. Had I time, I could enlarge on the beautiful turns of words and thoughts; which are as requisite in this, as in heroic poetry itself, of which the satire is undoubtedly a species. With these beautiful turns I confess myself to have been unacquainted, till about

[1] *Georgics*, IV.3-5, 208-9: 'I shall tell you of the wonderful pageant of tiny things—great chiefs, the character, studies, tribes, and battles of a whole nation. . . . But the immortal race remains, the fortune of the house stands firm for many a year, and there are recorded the grandfathers of grandfathers.'

[2] The War of the League of Augsburg, begun between William III and France in 1689, was still in progress.

twenty years ago, in a conversation which I had with that noble wit of Scotland, Sir George Mackenzie.[1] He asked me why I did not imitate in my verses the turns of Mr Waller and Sir John Denham, of which he repeated many to me. I had often read with pleasure, and with some profit, those two fathers of our English poetry; but had not seriously enough considered those beauties which gave the last perfection to their works. Some sprinklings of this kind I had also formerly in my plays; but they were casual, and not designed. But this hint, thus seasonably given me, first made me sensible of my own wants, and brought me afterwards to seek for the supply of them in other English authors. I looked over the darling of my youth, the famous Cowley;[2] there I found, instead of them, the points of wit, and quirks of epigram, even in the *Davideis*, an heroic poem, which is of an opposite nature to those puerilities; but no elegant turns either on the word or on the thought. Then I consulted a greater genius (without offence to the *Manes* of that noble author), I mean Milton. But as he endeavours everywhere to express Homer,[3] whose age had not arrived to that fineness, I found in him a true sublimity, lofty thoughts, which were clothed with admirable Grecisms, and ancient words, which he had been digging from the mines of Chaucer and of Spenser, and which, with all their rusticity, had somewhat of venerable in them. But I found not there neither that for which I looked. At last I had recourse to his master Spenser,[4] the author of that immortal poem called the *Fairy Queen*; and there I met with that which I had been looking for so long in vain. Spenser had studied Virgil to as much advantage as Milton had done Homer; and amongst the rest of his excellencies had copied that. Looking farther into the Italian, I found Tasso had done the same; nay more, that all the sonnets in that

[1] Mackenzie (1636-91), Lord Advocate and scholar, who founded the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh in 1682. 'Twenty years ago' carries one back only as far as the early 1670's, and Waller and Denham had been the declared models of Dryden's verse almost from the beginning; cf. *Of Dramatic Poesy*, vol. I, p. 24, above. If he is to be believed here, his interest in these models revived during the Seventies.

[2] Dryden's earliest surviving poem, 'Upon the Death of the Lord Hastings' (1649), is written in a metaphysical style very like Cowley's, to which he never returned.

[3] I.e. to write in the heroic manner.

[4] Dryden claimed personal knowledge here: 'Milton has acknowledged to me that Spenser was his original' (preface to *Fables*, p. 271, below).

language are on the turn of the first thought; which Mr Walsh,[1] in his late ingenious preface to his poems, has observed. In short, Virgil and Ovid are the two principal fountains of them in Latin poetry. And the French at this day are so fond of them that they judge them to be the first beauties: *délicat et bien tourné* are the highest commendations which they bestow on somewhat which they think a masterpiece.

An example of the turn on words, amongst a thousand others, is that in the last book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

> heu! quantum scelus est, in viscera, viscera condi!
> congestoque avidum pinguescere corpore corpus;
> alteriusque animantem animantis vivere leto.[2]

An example on the turn both of thoughts and words is to be found in Catullus, in the complaint of Ariadne, when she was left by Theseus:

> tum jam nulla viro juranti fæmina credat;
> nulla viri speret sermones esse fideles;
> qui, dum aliquid cupiens animus prægestit apisci,
> nil metuunt jurare, nihil promittere parcunt:
> sed simul ac cupidæ mentis satiata libido est,
> dicta nihil metuere, nihil perjuria curant.[3]

An extraordinary turn upon the words is that in Ovid's *Epistolæ Heroidum*, of Sappho to Phaon:

> si, nisi quæ forma poterit te digna videri,
> nulla futura tua est, nulla futura tua est.[4]

Lastly, a turn, which I cannot say is absolutely on words, for the thought turns with them, is in the fourth Georgic of Virgil; where Orpheus is to receive his wife from Hell, on express condition not to look on her till she was come on earth:

[1] William Walsh, *Letters and Poems Amorous and Gallant* (1692), contains a preface which says nothing of the sort. Dryden may be recalling a conversation with the younger poet.

[2] XV.88-90: 'Alas, how wicked to swallow flesh into our own flesh, to fatten our greedy bodies by cramming in other bodies, to feed one living creature through the death of another!'

[3] Catullus, LXIV.143-8: 'No woman, then, believes the word of a man, or expects him to keep promises. Men, yearning with desire and unfulfilled hopes, swear without a qualm and are never sparing in promises. But as soon as the lust of the heart is satisfied, they have no fear of their own words, and care nothing to break their promises.'

[4] *Heroides*, XV.39-40: 'If none is to be yours unless you think her worthy in her beauty, none, none shall be yours.'

cum subita incautum dementia cepit amantem;
ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere Manes.[1]

I will not burthen your Lordship with more of them; for I write to a master who understands them better than myself. But I may safely conclude them to be great beauties. I might descend also to the mechanic beauties of heroic verse; but we have yet no English *prosodia*,[2] not so much as a tolerable dictionary, or a grammar; so that our language is in a manner barbarous; and what government will encourage any one, or more, who are capable of refining it, I know not: but nothing under a public expense can go through with it.[3] And I rather fear a declination of the language than hope an advancement of it in the present age.

I am still speaking to you, my Lord, though in all probability you are already out of hearing. Nothing which my meanness can produce is worthy of this long attention. But I am come to the last petition of Abraham: if there be ten righteous lines in this vast preface, spare it for their sake; and also spare the next city, because it is but a little one.

I would excuse the performance of this translation, if it were all my own; but the better, tho' not the greater part, being the work of some gentlemen who have succeeded very happily in their undertaking, let their excellencies atone for my imperfections, and those of my sons.[4] I have perused some of the satires, which are done by other hands; and they seem to me as perfect in their kind as any thing I have seen in English verse. The common way which we have taken is not a literal translation, but a kind of paraphrase; or somewhat, which is yet more loose, betwixt a paraphrase and imitation.[5] It was not possible for us, or any men, to have made it pleasant any other way. If rendering the exact sense of those authors, almost line for line, had been our business, Barten Holyday had done it already to our hands: and by the help of his learned notes and illustrations,

[1] *Georgics*, IV.488-9: 'When a sudden madness seized the incautious lover—a madness fit to be pardoned, did the Fates know how to pardon.'

[2] Cf. the dedication to the *Aeneis*, p. 236n., below.

[3] A last despairing call for a British Academy by public subsidy which Dryden had first raised in the dedication to *Troilus and Cressida*, vol. I, p. 239n., above.

[4] Cf. introductory note, p. 71, above.

[5] Cf. preface to *Ovid's Epistles Translated*, vol. I, pp. 268-72, above.

not only of Juvenal and Persius but, what yet is more obscure, his own verses, might be understood.

But he wrote for fame, and wrote to scholars: we write only for the pleasure and entertainment of those gentlemen and ladies who, tho' they are not scholars, are not ignorant: persons of understanding and good sense who, not having been conversant in the original, or at least not having made Latin verse so much their business as to be critics in it, would be glad to find if the wit of our two great authors be answerable to their fame and reputation in the world. We have therefore endeavoured to give the public all the satisfaction we are able in this kind.

And if we are not altogether so faithful to our author as our predecessors Holyday and Stapylton, yet we may challenge to ourselves this praise, that we shall be far more pleasing to our readers. We have followed our authors at greater distance, tho' not step by step, as they have done. For oftentimes they have gone so close that they have trod on the heels of Juvenal and Persius, and hurt them by their too near approach. A noble author would not be pursued too close by a translator. We lose his spirit, when we think to take his body. The grosser part remains with us, but the soul is flown away in some noble expression, or some delicate turn of words or thought. Thus Holyday, who made this way his choice, seized the meaning of Juvenal; but the poetry has always escaped him.

They who will not grant me that pleasure is one of the ends of poetry, but that it is only a means of compassing the only end, which is instruction, must yet allow that, without the means of pleasure, the instruction is but a bare and dry philosophy: a crude preparation of morals, which we may have from Aristotle and Epictetus, with more profit than from any poet. Neither Holyday nor Stapylton have imitated Juvenal in the poetical part of him, his diction and his elocution. Nor had they been poets, as neither of them were, yet, in the way they took, it was impossible for them to have succeeded in the poetic part.

The English verse, which we call heroic, consists of no more than ten syllables; the Latin hexameter sometimes rises to seventeen; as, for example, this verse in Virgil:

pulverulenta putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.[1]

Here is the difference of no less than seven syllables in a line, betwixt the English and the Latin. Now the medium of these is about fourteen syllables; because the dactyl is a more frequent foot in hexameters than the spondee.

But Holyday, without considering that he writ with the disadvantage of four syllables less in every verse, endeavours to make one of his lines to comprehend the sense of one of Juvenal's. According to the falsity of the proposition was the success. He was forced to crowd his verse with ill-sounding monosyllables, of which our barbarous language affords him a wild plenty: and by that means he arrived at his pedantic end, which was to make a literal translation. His verses have nothing of verse in them, but only the worst part of it, the rhyme: and that, into the bargain, is far from good. But, which is more intolerable, by cramming his ill chosen and worse sounding monosyllables so close together, the very sense which he endeavours to explain is become more obscure than that of his author. So that Holyday himself cannot be understood without as large a commentary as that which he makes on his two authors. For my own part, I can make a shift to find the meaning of Juvenal without his notes: but his translation is more difficult than his author. And I find beauties in the Latin to recompense my pains; but in Holyday and Stapylton, my ears, in the first place, are mortally offended; and then their sense is so perplexed that I return to the original as the more pleasing task, as well as the more easy.

This must be said for our translation, that if we give not the whole sense of Juvenal, yet we give the most considerable part of it. We give it, in general, so clearly that few notes are sufficient to make us intelligible. We make our author at least appear in a poetic dress. We have actually made him more sounding, and more elegant, than he was before in English; and have endeavoured to make him speak that kind of English which he would have spoken had he lived in England, and had written to this age. If sometimes any of us (and 'tis but seldom)

[1] *Aeneid*, VIII.596 ('quadripedante . . . '). Dryden, in the 1697 Virgil, takes up the greater part of a couplet to translate it:
The neighing coursers answer to the sound,
And shake with horny hoofs the solid ground (VIII.789-90).

make him express the customs and manners of our native country rather than of Rome; 'tis either when there was some kind of analogy betwixt their customs and ours; or when, to make him more easy to vulgar understandings, we give him those manners which are familiar to us. But I defend not this innovation, 'tis enough if I can excuse it. For to speak sincerely, the manners of nations and ages are not to be confounded: we should either make them English, or leave them Roman. If this can neither be defended nor excused, let it be pardoned at least, because it is acknowledged; and so much the more easily, as being a fault which is never committed without some pleasure to the reader.

Thus, my Lord, having troubled you with a tedious visit, the best manners will be shewn in the least ceremony. I will slip away while your back is turned, and while you are otherwise employed; with great confusion for having entertained you so long with this discourse; and for having no other recompense to make you than the worthy labours of my fellow-undertakers in this work, and the thankful acknowledgments, prayers, and perpetual good wishes, of

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most obliged, most humble,

and most obedient servant,

John Dryden.

Aug. 18, 1692.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MY LORD RADCLIFFE

Prefixed to *Examen poeticum: Being the Third Part of Miscellany Poems* (1693).

THE STATE OF CRITICISM—GREEK, FRENCH DRAMA—TRANSLATION (OVID, HOMER)

Text: 8°, 1693.

Dryden contributed fifteen pieces—more than one quarter of the volume—to the third miscellany, which appeared in the summer of 1693. Ten appeared here for the first time, including versions of Ovid and Homer.

The preface is discursive even by Dryden's standards—a good deal of it resumes the defence of English drama made in the essay *Of Dramatic Poesy* a quarter of a century before—and it is full of the self-pity that characterized the ageing poet after his dismissal from Court favour in 1689. Its chief interest lies in its renewed plea for free and vigorous translation of the classical poets.

MY LORD,[1]

THESE Miscellany Poems are by many titles yours. The first they claim from your acceptance of my promise to present them to you, before some of them were yet in being. The rest are derived from your own merit, the exactness of your judgment in poetry, and the candour of your nature; easy to forgive some trivial faults when they come accompanied with countervailing beauties. But after all, though these are your equitable claims to a dedication from other poets, yet I must acknowledge a bribe in the case, which is your particular liking of my verses. 'Tis a vanity common to all writers to overvalue their own productions; and 'tis better for me to own this failing in myself, than the world to do it for me. For what other reason have I spent my life in so

[1] Edward Lord Radclyffe (1655-1705), who succeeded his father as second Earl of Derwentwater in 1696, was at this moment the object of one of Dryden's desperate appeals for financial help. In a letter to Tonson (30 August 1693), the publisher of the miscellany, he reveals his disappointment (*Ward*, p. 58).

unprofitable a study? Why am I grown old, in seeking so barren a reward as fame? The same parts and application which have made me a poet might have raised me to any honours of the gown, which are often given to men of as little learning and less honesty than myself. No government has ever been, or ever can be, wherein timeservers and blockheads will not be uppermost. The persons are only changed, but the same jugglings in State, the same hypocrisy in religion, the same self-interest and mismanagement, will remain for ever. Blood and money will be lavished in all ages, only for the preferment of new faces with old consciences. There is too often a jaundice in the eyes of great men; they see not those they raise in the same colours with other men. All whom they affect look golden to them; when the gilding is only in their own distempered sight. These considerations have given me a kind of contempt for those who have risen by unworthy ways. I am not ashamed to be little, when I see them so infamously great; neither do I know why the name of poet should be dishonourable to me, if I am truly one, as I hope I am; for I will never do any thing that shall dishonour it. The notions of morality are known to all men; none can pretend ignorance of those ideas which are inborn in mankind; and if I see one thing, and practise the contrary, I must be disingenuous not to acknowledge a clear truth, and base to act against the light of my own conscience. For the reputation of my honesty, no man can question it who has any of his own; for that of my poetry, it shall either stand by its own merit, or fall for want of it. Ill writers are usually the sharpest censors; for they (as the best poet and the best patron said),

> When in the full perfection of decay,
> Turn vinegar, and come again in play.[1]

Thus the corruption of a poet is the generation of a critic:[2] I mean of a critic in the general acceptation of this age. For formerly they were quite another species of men. They were defenders of poets, and commentators on their works; to illustrate obscure beauties; to place some passages in a better light; to redeem others from malicious interpretations; to help out an

[1] Dorset, 'To Mr Edward Howard, on his Incomparable, Incomprehensible Poem.'

[2] Cf. 'Defence of *An Essay*,' vol. I, pp. 118-19n., above and p. 212, below.

author's modesty, who is not ostentatious of his wit; and, in short, to shield him from the ill-nature of those fellows who were then called *Zoili* and *Momi*, and now take upon themselves the venerable name of censors.[1] But neither Zoilus, nor he who endeavoured to defame Virgil,[2] were ever adopted into the name of critic by the Ancients: what their reputation was then, we know; and their successors in this age deserve no better. Are our auxiliary forces turned our enemies? Are they, who at best are but wits of the second order, and whose only credit amongst readers is what they obtained by being subservient to the fame of writers, are these become rebels of slaves, and usurpers of subjects; or, to speak in the most honourable terms of them, are they from our seconds become principals against us? Does the ivy undermine the oak which supports its weakness? What labour would it cost them to put in a better line, than the worst of those which they expunge in a true poet? Petronius, the greatest wit perhaps of all the Romans, yet when his envy prevailed upon his judgment to fall on Lucan, he fell himself in his attempt;[3] he performed worse in his *Essay of the Civil War* than the author of the *Pharsalia*; and, avoiding his errors, has made greater of his own. Julius Scaliger would needs turn down Homer, and abdicate him after the possession of three thousand years:[4] has he succeeded in his attempt? He has indeed shown us some of those imperfections in him which are incident to human kind; but who had not rather be that Homer than this Scaliger? You see the same hypercritic, when he endeavours to mend the beginning of Claudian[5] (a faulty poet, and living in a barbarous age); yet how short he comes of him, and substitutes such verses of his own as deserve the ferula. What a censure has he made of Lucan, that he rather seems to bark than sing?[6] Would any but a dog have made so snarling a comparison? One would have thought he had learned Latin as late as they tell us he did Greek. Yet he came off, with a *pace tuâ*, by your good leave, Lucan; he called him not by those outrageous names of *fool*, *booby*, and

[1] Evidently the classical critics, such as Horace and Quintilian, are being used as a stick to beat the Restoration critics with. Zoilus was a grammarian of Amphipolis, Momus the god of censure.

[2] Probably Carvilius Pictor, who according to Donatus wrote an *Aeneidomastix*.

[3] *Satyricon*, 118-24.

[4] *Poetices*, V.3.

[5] *Ibid.*, VI.5 (entitled 'Hypercriticus').

[6] *Ibid.*, VI.6.

blockhead: he had somewhat more of good manners than his successors, as he had much more knowledge. We have two sorts of those gentlemen in our nation: some of them, proceeding with a seeming moderation and pretence of respect to the dramatic writers of this last age, only scorn and vilify the present poets to set up their predecessors.[1] But this is only in appearance; for their real design is nothing less than to do honour to any man besides themselves. Horace took notice of such men in his age:

non ingeniis favet ille sepultis,
nostra sed impugnat; nos nostraque lividus odit.[2]

'Tis not with an ultimate intention to pay reverence to the *manes* of Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Ben Jonson that they commend their writings, but to throw dirt on the writers of this age: their declaration is one thing, and their practice is another. By a seeming veneration to our fathers, they would thrust out us, their lawful issue, and govern us themselves, under a specious pretence of reformation. If they could compass their intent, what would wit and learning get by such a change? If we are bad poets, they are worse, and when any of their woeful pieces come abroad, the difference is so great betwixt them and good writers that there needs no criticisms on our part to decide it. When they describe the writers of this age, they draw such monstrous figures of them as resemble none of us; our pretended pictures are so unlike that 'tis evident we never sat to them: they are all grotesque; the products of their wild imaginations, things out of nature; so far from being copied from us that they resemble nothing that ever was, or even can be.

But there is another sort of insects,[3] more venomous than

[1] This may be a reference to Thomas Shadwell, who had replaced Dryden as Laureate in 1689. He had died in November 1692.

[2] Epistles, II.i.88-9: 'He does not favour buried genius, but attacks us, and in his anger hates us and ours.'

[3] An attack on Thomas Rymer, who had been appointed to succeed Shadwell as Historiographer Royal in 1692. After years of cautious respect for Rymer, Dryden's explosion against him, when it came, was based on personal pique rather than critical principle. Rymer is probably the author of the scurrilous broadsheet *An Epistle to Mr Dryden* ('Dryden, thy wit has catterwauled too long . . .'), issued at the time of the Revolution (*Macdonald*, 256), which may have been motive enough. The reference to Rymer is fully confirmed by a letter from Dryden to Tonson (30 August 1693), written a few weeks after the appearance of the third miscellany (*Ward*, no. 26). Dryden complains there that 'about a fortnight ago I had an intimation from a friend by letter that one of the Secretaries, I suppose Trenchard,

the former; those who manifestly aim at the destruction of our poetical church and state; who allow nothing to their countrymen, either of this or of the former age. These attack the living by raking up the ashes of the dead; well knowing that if they can subvert their original title to the stage, we who claim under them must fall of course. Peace be to the venerable shades of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson! None of the living will presume to have any competition with them: as they were our predecessors, so they were our masters. We trail our plays under them; but (as at the funerals of a Turkish emperor) our ensigns are furled or dragged upon the ground, in honour to the dead; so we may lawfully advance our own afterwards, to show that we succeed; if less in dignity, yet on the same foot and title, which we think too we can maintain against the insolence of our own Janizaries. If I am the man, as I have reason to believe, who am seemingly courted, and secretly undermined; I think I shall be able to defend myself, when I am openly attacked; and to shew, besides, that the Greek writers only gave us the rudiments of a stage which they never finished; that many of the tragedies in the former age amongst us were without comparison beyond those of Sophocles and Euripides. But at present I have neither the leisure nor the means for such an undertaking. 'Tis ill going to law for an estate with him who is in possession of it, and enjoys the present profits to feed his cause. But the *quantum mutatus* may be remembered in due time. In the meanwhile, I leave the world to judge who gave the provocation.

This, my Lord, is, I confess, a long digression, from Miscellany Poems to Modern Tragedies: but I have the ordinary excuse of an injured man, who will be telling his tale unseasonably to

had informed the Queen [Mary II] that I had abused her Government (those were the words) in my Epistle to my Lord Radclyffe; and that thereupon she had commanded her Historiographer Rhymer to fall upon my plays; which he assures me he is now doing. I doubt not his malice, from a former hint you gave me: and if he be employed, I am confident 'tis of his own seeking; who you know has spoken slightly of me in his last critique [*A Short View*]: and that gave me occasion to snarl again.' Rymer's attack on Dryden's plays never saw the light; but his compliment to Dryden in *A Short View of Tragedy* (1693), which had appeared towards the end of 1692, might be thought a sarcastic one: 'If Mr Dryden might try his pen on this subject [the Spanish Armada], doubtless, to an audience that heartily love their country, and glory in the virtue of their ancestors, his imitation of Aeschylus would have better success, and would pit, box, and gallery far beyond any thing now in possession of the stage, however wrought up by the unimitable Shakespeare' (*Critical Works*, ed. Zimansky, pp. 92-3).

his betters; though, at the same time, I am certain you are so good a friend as to take a concern in all things which belong to one who so truly honours you. And besides, being yourself a critic of the genuine sort, who have read the best authors in their own languages, who perfectly distinguish of their several merits, and in general prefer them to the Moderns, yet, I know, you judge for the English tragedies against Greek and Latin, as well as against the French, Italian, and Spanish of these latter ages. Indeed, there is a vast difference betwixt arguing like Perrault[1] in behalf of the French poets, against Homer and Virgil, and betwixt giving the English poets their undoubted due of excelling Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles. For if we, or our greater fathers, have not yet brought the drama to an absolute perfection, yet at least we have carried it much farther than those ancient Greeks; who, beginning from a Chorus, could never totally exclude it, as we have done; who find it an unprofitable encumbrance, without any necessity of entertaining it amongst us, and without the possibility of establishing it here, unless it were supported by a public charge. Neither can we accept of those Lay-Bishops, as some call them, who, under pretence of reforming the stage, would intrude themselves upon us as our superiors; being indeed incompetent judges of what is manners, what religion and, least of all, what is poetry and good sense. I can tell them, in behalf of all my fellows, that when they come to exercise a jurisdiction over us, they shall have the stage to themselves, as they have the laurel. As little can I grant that the French dramatic writers excel the English. Our authors as far surpass them in genius, as our soldiers excel theirs in courage. 'Tis true, in conduct they surpass us either way; yet that proceeds not so much from their greater knowledge, as from the difference of tastes in the two nations. They content themselves with a thin design, without episodes, and managed by few persons. Our audience will not be pleased but with variety of accidents, an under-plot, and many actors. They follow the Ancients too servilely in the mechanic rules, and we assume too much licence to ourselves, in keeping them only in view at too great a distance. But if our audience had their tastes, our poets could more easily

[1] The third volume of Perrault's *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes* (1688-97), on the superiority of French poetry over that of the Ancients, had just appeared in 1692.

comply with them than the French writers could come up to the sublimity of our thoughts, or to the difficult variety of our designs. However it be, I dare establish it for a rule of practice on the stage, that we are bound to please those whom we pretend to entertain; and that at any price, religion and good manners only excepted. And I care not much if I gave this handle to our bad illiterate poetasters, for the defence of their *scriptions*,[1] as they call them. There is a sort of merit in delighting the spectators: which is a name more proper for them than that of auditors; or else Horace is in the wrong when he commends Lucilius for it.[2] But these commonplaces I mean to treat at greater leisure; in the mean time submitting that little I have said to your Lordship's approbation, or your censure, and choosing rather to entertain you this way, as you are a judge of writing, than to oppress your modesty with other commendations; which, though they are your due, yet would not be equally received in this satirical and censorious age. That which cannot without injury be denied to you, is the easiness of your conversation, far from affectation or pride; not denying even to enemies their just praises. And this, if I would dwell on any theme of this nature, is no vulgar commendation to your Lordship. Without flattery, my Lord, you have it in your nature to be a patron and encourager of good poets, but your fortune has not yet put into your hands the opportunity of expressing it. What you will be hereafter may be more than guessed by what you are at present. You maintain the character of a nobleman without that haughtiness which generally attends too many of the nobility, and when you converse with gentlemen, you forget not that you have been of their order. You are married to the daughter of a King,[3] who, amongst her other high perfections, has derived from him a charming behaviour, a winning goodness, and a majestic person. The Muses and the Graces are the ornaments of your family; while the Muse sings, the Grace accompanies her voice: even the servants of the Muses have sometimes had the happiness to hear her, and to receive their inspirations from her.

[1] Evidently a fashionable word in literary jargon. The earliest recorded use of the word is Elizabethan; it later came to refer to handwriting.

[2] *Satires*, I.x.8.

[3] Lady Radclyffe was the illegitimate daughter of the late Charles II and Mary Davies. A surviving letter from Dryden to Tonson (30 August 1693) shows that Radclyffe failed to respond to this plea for patronage.

I will not give myself the liberty of going farther; for 'tis so sweet to wander in a pleasing way, that I should never arrive at my journey's end. To keep myself from being belated in my letter, and tiring your attention, I must return to the place where I was setting out. I humbly dedicate to your Lordship my own labours in this Miscellany; at the same time not arrogating to myself the privilege of inscribing to you the works of others who are joined with me in this undertaking, over which I can pretend no right. Your Lady and you have done me the favour to hear me read my translations of Ovid;[1] and you both seemed not to be displeased with them. Whether it be the partiality of an old man to his youngest child, I know not; but they appear to me the best of all my endeavours in this kind. Perhaps this poet is more easy to be translated than some others whom I have lately attempted; perhaps, too, he was more according to my genius. He is certainly more palatable to the reader than any of the Romans wits; though some of them are more lofty, some more instructive, and others more correct. He had learning enough to make him equal to the best. But, as his verse came easily, he wanted the toil of application to amend it. He is often luxuriant, both in his fancy and expressions; and, as it has lately been observed, not always natural. If wit be pleasantry, he has it to excess: but if it be propriety, Lucretius, Horace, and above all Virgil, are his superiors. I have said so much of him already in my preface to his Heroical Epistles,[2] that there remains little to be added in this place. For my own part, I have endeavoured to copy his character what I could in this translation, even perhaps farther than I should have done; to his very faults. Mr Chapman, in his translation of Homer, professes to have done it somewhat paraphrastically, and that on set purpose; his opinion being that a good poet is to be translated in that manner.[3]

[1] The third miscellany included Dryden's versions of the first book of the *Metamorphoses*, and of parts of the ninth and thirteenth books, all published here for the first time.

[2] Cf. the preface to *Ovid's Epistles Translated* (1680), vol. I, pp. 262f., above.

[3] George Chapman, 'To the Reader,' prefixed to *The Whole Works of Homer* (1616): 'Always conceiving how pedantical and absurd it is in the interpretation of any author (much more of Homer) to turn him word for word when (according to Horace and other best lawgivers to translators) it is the part of every knowing and judicial interpreter . . . sentences to weigh diligently, and to clothe and adorn them with words, and such a style and form of oration as are most apt for the language into which they are converted.'

I remember not the reason which he gives for it; but I suppose it is for fear of omitting any of his excellencies. Sure I am, that if it be a fault, 'tis much more pardonable than that of those who run into the other extreme of a literal and close translation, where the poet is confined so straitly to his author's words that he wants elbow-room to express his elegancies. He leaves him obscure; he leaves him prose, where he found him verse. And no better than thus has Ovid been served by the so much admired Sandys.[1] This is at least the idea which I have remaining of his translation; for I never read him since I was a boy. They who take him upon content, from the praises which their fathers gave him, may inform their judgment by reading him again, and see (if they understand the original) what is become of Ovid's poetry in his version; whether it be not all, or the greatest part of it, evaporated. But this proceeded from the wrong judgment of the age in which he lived. They neither knew good verse, nor loved it; they were scholars, 'tis true, but they were pedants;[2] and for a just reward of their pedantic pains, all their translations want to be translated into English.

If I flatter not myself, or if my friends have not flattered me I have given my author's sense for the most part truly; for to mistake sometimes is incident to all men; and not to follow the Dutch commentators[3] always may be forgiven to a man who thinks them, in the general, heavy, gross-witted fellows, fit only to gloss on their own dull poets. But I leave a farther satire on their wit, till I have a better opportunity to shew how much I love and honour them. I have likewise attempted to restore Ovid to his native sweetness, easiness, and smoothness; and to give my poetry a kind of cadence and, as we call it, a run of verse, as like the original as the English can come up to the Latin. As he seldom uses any synalæphas,[4] so I have endeavoured to avoid them as often as I could. I have likewise given him his own turns, both on the words and on the thought; which I cannot say are inimitable, because I have copied them, and so may others, if they use the same diligence; but certainly they

[1] George Sandys, *Ovid's Metamorphosis* (1626).

[2] Cf. Johnson's judgment of the early seventeenth century in his Life of Cowley: 'The metaphysical poets were men of learning, and to show their learning was their whole endeavour. . . .'

[3] Heinsius and Cnipping; cf. preface to *Ovid's Epistles Translated*, vol. I, p. 266n., above.

[4] I.e. elisions, as Dryden explains below: cf. p. 22, above.

are wonderfully graceful in this poet. Since I have named the synalæpha, which is the cutting off one vowel immediately before another, I will give an example of it from Chapman's Homer, which lies before me, for the benefit of those who understand not the Latin *prosodia*. 'Tis in the first line of the argument to the first Iliad:

Apollo's priest to th' Argive fleet doth bring, etc.

There we see he makes it not *the Argive*, but *th' Argive*, to shun the shock of the two vowels immediately following each other. But in his second argument, in the same page, he gives a bad example of the quite contrary kind:

Alpha the pray'r of Chryses sings:
The army's plague, the strife of kings.

In these words, *the army's*, *the* ending with a vowel, and *army's* beginning with another vowel, without cutting off the first, which by it had been *th' army's*, there remains a most horrible ill-sounding gap betwixt those words. I cannot say that I have everywhere observed the rule of this synalæpha in my translation; but wheresoever I have not, 'tis a fault in sound. The French and the Italians have made it an inviolable precept in their versification; therein following the severe example of the Latin poets. Our countrymen have not yet reformed their poetry so far, but content themselves with following the licentious practice of the Greeks; who, though they sometimes use synalæphas, yet make no difficulty, very often, to sound one vowel upon another; as Homer does, in the very first line of *Alpha*:

Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος

'Tis true, indeed, that, in the second line, in these words, μυρί' Ἀχαιοῖς, and ἄλγε' ἔθηκε, the synalæpha, in revenge, is twice observed. But it becomes us, for the sake of euphony, rather *Musas colere severiores*[1] with the Romans, than to give in to the looseness of the Grecians.

I have tired myself, and have been summoned by the press to send away this Dedication; otherwise I had exposed some other faults, which are daily committed by our English poets;

[1] Martial, IX.xii.17: 'to cultivate the graver Muses.'

which, with care and observation, might be amended. For after all, our language is both copious, significant, and majestical, and might be reduced into a more harmonious sound. But for want of public encouragement, in this Iron Age, we are so far from making any progress in the improvement of our tongue, that in few years we shall speak and write as barbarously as our neighbours.

Notwithstanding my haste, I cannot forbear to tell your Lordship that there are two fragments of Homer[1] translated in this Miscellany: one by Mr Congreve (whom I cannot mention without the honour which is due to his excellent parts, and that entire affection which I bear him), and the other by myself. Both the subjects are pathetical; and I am sure my friend has added to the tenderness which he found in the original and, without flattery, surpassed his author. Yet I must needs say this in reference to Homer, that he is much more capable of exciting the manly passions than those of grief and pity. To cause admiration is, indeed, the proper and adequate design of an epic poem;[2] and in that he has excelled even Virgil. Yet, without presuming to arraign our master, I may venture to affirm that he is somewhat too talkative, and more than somewhat too digressive. This is so manifest that it cannot be denied in that little parcel which I have translated, perhaps too literally: there Andromache, in the midst of her concernment and fright for Hector, runs off her bias[3] to tell him a story of her pedigree, and of the lamentable death of her father, her mother, and her seven brothers. The devil was in Hector if he knew not all this matter, as well as she who told it him; for she had been his bedfellow for many years together: and if he knew it, then it must be confessed that Homer, in this long digression, has rather given us his own character than that of the fair lady whom he paints. His dear friends the commentators, who never fail him at a pinch, will needs excuse him by making the present sorrow of Andromache to occasion the remembrance of all the past; but others think that she had enough to do with that grief which now

[1] In fact, three: Congreve contributed two versions from Homer, 'Priam's Lamentation and Petition' and 'The Lamentations of Hecuba, Andromache, and Helen,' and Dryden 'The Last Parting of Hector and Andromache.'

[2] An echo of Longinus; cf. preface to *The State of Innocence*, vol. I, pp. 195f., above.

[3] I.e. wanders from the true path, as of a bowl that does not run true.

oppressed her without running for assistance to her family. Virgil, I am confident, would have omitted such a work of supererogation. But Virgil had the gift of expressing much in little, and sometimes in silence. For, though he yielded much to Homer in invention, he more excelled him in his admirable judgment. He drew the passion of Dido for Æneas in the most lively and most natural colours that are imaginable. Homer was ambitious enough of moving pity, for he has attempted twice on the same subject of Hector's death; first, when Priam and Hecuba beheld his corpse, which was dragged after the chariot of Achilles; and then in the lamentation which was made over him, when his body was redeemed by Priam;[1] and the same persons again bewail his death, with a chorus of others to help the cry. But if this last excite compassion in you, as I doubt not but it will, you are more obliged to the translator than the poet. For Homer, as I observed before, can move rage better than he can pity. He stirs up the irascible appetite,[2] as our philosophers call it, he provokes to murther, and the destruction of God's images; he forms and equips those ungodly man-killers whom we poets, when we flatter them, call heroes; a race of men who can never enjoy quiet in themselves, till they have taken it from all the world. This is Homer's commendation, and such as it is, the lovers of peace, or at least of more moderate heroism, will never envy him. But let Homer and Virgil contend for the prize of honour betwixt themselves; I am satisfied they will never have a third concurrent. I wish Mr Congreve had the leisure to translate him, and the world the good nature and justice to encourage him in that noble design, of which he is more capable than any man I know. The Earl of Mulgrave and Mr Waller, two [of] the best judges of our age, have assured me that they could never read over the translation of Chapman without incredible pleasure and extreme transport. This admiration of theirs must needs proceed from the author himself; for the translator has thrown him down as low as harsh numbers, improper English, and a monstrous length of verse could carry him. What then would he appear in the harmonious version of one of the best writers, living in a much better age than was the

[1] *Iliad*, xxii, xxiv.
[2] Robert Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621, etc.), distinguished two 'inclinations' which trouble the fancy: 'irascible, and concupiscible' (I.ii.3.3).

last? I mean for versification, and the art of numbers; for in the drama we have not arrived to the pitch of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. But here, my Lord, I am forced to break off abruptly, without endeavouring at a compliment in the close. This Miscellany is, without dispute, one of the best of the kind which has hitherto been extant in our tongue. At least, as Sir Samuel Tuke has said before me,[1] a modest man may praise what's not his own. My fellows have no need of any protection; but I humbly recommend my part of it, as much as it deserves, to your patronage and acceptance, and all the rest to your forgiveness.

I am,
My Lord,
Your Lordship's most obedient servant,
JOHN DRYDEN.

[1] In his prologue to *The Adventures of Five Hours* (1663).

TO MY DEAR FRIEND MR CONGREVE, ON HIS COMEDY CALLED *THE DOUBLE-DEALER*

Prefixed to Congreve, *The Double-Dealer* (1694)

THE DRAMA OF THE ELIZABETHANS—OF THE RESTORATION—CONGREVE

Text: 4°, 1694.

Dryden probably met the young William Congreve (1670-1729) in 1692 (*Macdonald*, p. 54n.)—introduced, it seems likely, by Southerne, with the object of seeking Dryden's advice on his first play *The Old Bachelor* (cf. l. 55 and n., below). The old poet's reception of Congreve's second comedy, for which he wrote these complimentary verses, seems generous and enthusiastic; but they are chiefly remarkable for their brilliant summary of the evolution of the English drama since Shakespeare.

Congreve's *Double-Dealer* was first performed, with doubtful success, in November 1693. According to Dryden's letter to Walsh dated 12 December 1693 (pp. 174-5, below), his verses 'were written before the play was acted.'

Well, then; the promis'd hour is come at last;
The present age of wit obscures the past.
Strong were our sires; and as they fought they writ,
Conqu'ring with force of arms, and dint of wit;
Theirs was the giant race before the Flood;
And thus, when Charles return'd, our Empire stood.
Like Janus[1] he the stubborn soil manur'd,
With rules of husbandry the rankness cur'd;
Tam'd us to manners, when the stage was rude;
And boist'rous English wit with art indu'd.

[1] A native of ancient Thessaly who, according to the Roman poets, pioneered a colony on the Tiber before the foundation of Rome.

Our age was cultivated thus at length;
But what we gain'd in skill we lost in strength.
Our builders were with want of genius curst;
The second temple[1] was not like the first:
Till you, the best Vitruvius,[2] come at length;
Our beauties equal; but excel our strength.
Firm Doric pillars found your solid base;
The fair Corinthian crowns the higher space;
Thus all below is strength, and all above is grace.
In easy dialogue is Fletcher's praise:
He mov'd the mind, but had not power to raise.
Great Jonson did by strength of judgment please:
Yet doubling Fletcher's force, he wants his ease.
In differing talents both adorn'd their age;
One for study, t'other for the stage.
But both to Congreve justly shall submit,
One match'd in judgment, both o'ermatch'd in wit.
In him all beauties of this age we see;
Etherege his courtship, Southerne's purity;
The satire, wit, and strength of manly Wycherley.[3]
All this in blooming youth you have achiev'd;
Nor are your foil'd contemporaries griev'd;
So much the sweetness of your manners move,
We cannot envy you, because we love.
Fabius might joy in Scipio, when he saw
A beardless Consul made against the law,
And join his suffrage to the votes of Rome;
Though he with Hannibal was overcome.[4]
Thus old Romano bow'd to Raphael's fame;
And scholar to the youth he taught, became.[5]

[1] After comparing the Puritan Revolution of 1642-60 to the Flood (l. 5), Dryden now compares it to the Babylonian captivity.

[2] An architect of the reign of Augustus and author of the only surviving treatise on building of the ancient world.

[3] Sir George Etherege (1635-91) published the first of his comedies in 1664, Thomas Southerne (1659-1746) his first play in 1682. The dramatic career of William Wycherley (1640?-1716) was confined to the 1670's; Manly was the name of his hero in *The Plain Dealer* (1677).

[4] Plutarch tells how Fabius, himself unsuccessful against Hannibal in Italy, envied Scipio's generalship and voted against his proposal to carry the war into Africa.

[5] But Giulio Romano was merely Raphael's pupil. Raphael, as a youth, had collaborated with his master Vanucci in his studio in Perugia.

Oh, that your brows my laurel had sustain'd,
Well had I been depos'd, if you had reign'd!
The father had descended for the son;
For only you are lineal to the throne.
Thus when the state one Edward did depose,
A greater Edward in his room arose.[1]
But now, not I, but poetry is curs'd;
For Tom the Second reigns like Tom the First.[2]
But let 'em not mistake my patron's[3] part;
Nor call his charity their own desert.
Yet this I prophesy: thou shalt be seen
(Tho' with some short parenthesis between)
High on the throne of wit; and seated there,
Not mine (that's little) but thy laurel wear.
The first attempt[4] an early promise made;
That early promise this has more than paid.
So bold, yet so judiciously you dare,
That your least praise is to be regular.
Time, place, and action may with pains be wrought,
But genius must be born; and never can be taught.
This is your portion; this your native store;
Heav'n, that but once was prodigal before,
To Shakespeare gave as much; she could not give him more.

Maintain your post: that's all the fame you need;
For 'tis impossible you should proceed.
Already I am worn with cares and age;
And just abandoning th' ungrateful stage.
Unprofitably kept at Heav'n's expense,
I live a rent-charge on His providence.[5]

[1] Edward III, who succeeded his deposed father Edward II in 1327.

[2] Thomas Shadwell succeeded Dryden as both Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal in 1689. In 1692, on Shadwell's death, Nahum Tate succeeded to the first post, and Thomas Rymer to the second.

[3] I.e. the Earl of Dorset (1638-1706), the Eugenius of the essay *Of Dramatic Poesy*, whose duty it was, as Lord Chamberlain, to make these appointments.

[4] *The Old Bachelor* (1693) which, according to Southerne's unpublished 'Memoirs Relating to Mr Congreve' in the British Museum, was read by Dryden in manuscript, who declared that 'the stuff was rich indeed, it wanted only the fashionable cut of the town', and proceeded to 'put it in the order it was played.' Quoted by Macdonald, p. 54n.

[5] I.e. God keeps the poet, since William III will not.

But you, whom ev'ry muse and grace adorn,
Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
Be kind to my remains; and oh, defend,
Against your judgment, your departed friend!
Let not the insulting foe my fame pursue;
But shade those laurels which descend to you;
And take for tribute what these lines express:
Your merit more; nor could my love do less.

LETTER TO WILLIAM WALSH

12 December 1693

TRAGI-COMEDY—CONGREVE—TRANSLATING VIRGIL

Text: first printed with preceding letter in *Bell*; *Ward*, no. 28. The text followed here is based on the ms. in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

A reply to a lost letter from Walsh, apparently outlining his ideas for the preface he had promised for Dryden's play, *Love Triumphant*, which was first performed a few weeks later. On 9 May 1693 Dryden had written to Walsh (*Ward*, no. 24) that he had asked his publisher Tonson to send Walsh 'the books you desired, in order to the writing of a preface before my next play. . . . For I shall be very proud of your entering into the lists, though not against Rymer, yet as a champion for our cause who defy the chorus of the Ancients.' This suggests a reply to Rymer's *Short View of Tragedy* (1693), which had appeared at the end of 1692. But Walsh's preface was not accepted for publication, the excuse suggested in the following letter being that it was too long, though Dryden may have found it unsuitable for some other reason he was tactfully unwilling to name.

DEAR MR WALSH,

I HAVE read over your letter many times: and you know that when we repeat actions often, 'tis with pleasure. The method which you have taken is wonderfully good; and not only all present poets, but all who are to come in England, will thank you for freeing them from the too servile imitation of the Ancients. If hereafter the audience will come to taste the confinement of the French (which I believe the English never will), then it will be easy for their poets to follow the strictness of the mechanic rules in the three unities. In the meantime, I am afraid for my sake you discover not your opinion concerning my irregular way of tragi-comedies in my *doppia favola*.[1] I beseech

[1] I.e. double plot, as in Mascardi's treatise; cf. 'Discourse Concerning Satire,' p. 145n., above.

you, let no consideration of mine hinder you from making a perfect critique. I will never defend that practice, for I know it distracts the hearers. But I know, withal, that it has hitherto pleased them, for the sake of variety; and for the particular taste which they have to low comedy. Mascardi, in some of his Miscellany Treatises, has a chapter concerning this; and exemplifies in the Satire and Corisca of the *Pastor Fido*. As I remember, those two persons, though not of a piece with the rest, yet serve in the conclusion to the discovery and beauty of the design. Your critique, by your description of its bulk, will be too large for a preface to my play, which is now studying, but cannot be acted till after Christmas is over. I call it *Love Triumphant: or Nature Will Prevail*, unless instead of the second title you like this other, *Neither Side to Blame*:[1] which is very proper to the two chief characters of the hero and heroine, who notwithstanding the extravagance of their passion are neither of them faulty, either in duty or in honour. Your judgment of it, if you please. When you do me the favour to send me your book, I will take care to correct the press, and to have it printed well. It will be more for your honour, too, to print it alone, and take off the suspicion of your being too much my friend—I mean too partial to me—if it comes in company of my play.

I have remembered you to all your friends, and in particular to Congreve, who sends you his play as a present from himself, by this conveyance; and much desires the honour of being better known to you. His *Double-Dealer*[2] is much censured by the greater part of the town: and is defended only by the best judges who, you know, are commonly the fewest. Yet it gets ground daily, and has already been acted eight times. The women think he has exposed their bitchery too much; and the gentlemen are offended with him for the discovery of their follies and the way of their intrigues, under the notion of friendship to their ladies' husbands. My verses,[3] which you will find before it, were written

[1] The play was probably acted in January 1694, being Dryden's swan-song as a dramatist. Evelyn noted in his diary (11 January 1694): 'Supped at Mr Ed. Sheldon's, where was Mr Dryden the poet, who now intending to write no more plays (intent upon the translation of Virgil), read to us his prologue and epilogue to his last valedictory play now shortly to be acted.' It failed completely on the stage. The quarto appeared shortly after with the first-named subtitle, *Nature Will Prevail*, on its title-page.

[2] Congreve's comedy had been first performed in November 1693.

[3] Cf. pp. 169-72, above.

before the play was acted. But I neither altered them, nor do I alter my opinion of the play.

For other news, you will hear from all hands that the House of Lords grow very warm, and have a mind to try the Land Admirals, those of the sea having been acquitted by the Commons.[1] Yet they have ordered Rooke, Killigrew, Shovell, and the Turkish merchants to appear before them: and, on the other side, the King has taken away the commissions of the marine admirals. You know Russell[2] will be the man. The Whig party, who brought in the King, think Killigrew and his brethren Jacobites, and my Lord Carmarthen with all the High Church men to be betrayers of the Government. In my conscience, they wrong them. The Commons are inspecting their own house, for the private pensions, which Squib[3] pretends to discover, and will name above a hundred men. It will all come to nothing, I believe, by the over votes of the other side in both houses: when they are tired, they will give the six millions; and next Michaelmas we shall have a new Parliament. But for the Triennial Bill, now sent down from the Lords, I conceive it will be thrown out by the Commons, because of the rider which explains the word *holden* not to signify *to hold*.[4] We hear of about ten of our Easterland ships and two small men of war are taken by du Bart[5] and carried into France: they were laden with corn and other provisions.

Last, for myself: I have undertaken to translate all Virgil, and as an essay have already paraphrased the third Georgic as an

[1] The Smyrna fleet, a convoy of about four hundred merchant ships, had been lost seven months before to the French fleet under Tourville on its way to the Mediterranean, through a miscalculation on the part of Admiral Sir George Rooke and his joint admirals Henry Killigrew and Sir Clowdisley Shovell, who left Rooke to fight alone.

[2] Edward Russell, reinstated in his command in the previous month and, as Dryden correctly predicts, made First Lord of the Admiralty in May 1694.

[3] Robert Squib, summoned by the Commons on 9 December 1693 to reveal sums paid to Members by the late William Jephson.

[4] Two weeks before, on 28 November 1693, the Commons had debated Brockman's Bill for more frequent elections, which it rejected after a debate on the significance of the archaic past participle 'holden' (possessed of). Harley argued that 'it is not for the interest of England to part with a word, in so many laws made use of' (cf. *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England*, vol. v, cols. 787-8). Dryden, of course, was deeply contemptuous of the Parliament of William III and all its works.

[5] A French privateer.

example; it will be published in Tonson's next Miscellanies,[1] in Hilary term. I propose to do it by subscription, having an hundred and two brass cuts, with the coats of arms of the subscriber to each cut; and every subscriber to pay five guineas, half in hand, besides another inferior subscription of two guineas for the rest, whose names are only written in a catalogue printed with the book.

I am, dear Sir,
Your most faithful servant,
JOHN DRYDEN.

Dec. 12th.

I have just received your verses to Mr Wycherley,[2] but cannot stay to read them before I put up this letter, 'tis so late at night.

For William Walsh, Esq.
At Abberley, near Worcester,
These:
By Worcester stage coach,
with a small parcel in
paper, directed to Mr Walsh.

[1] *Fourth Miscellany* (1694), reprinted with minor revisions in the 1697 Virgil.

[2] Probably Walsh's verses to introduce Wycherley's *Miscellany Poems*, proposed in the *London Gazette* as early as November-December 1696, but not published till 1704 (owing to a disagreement between Wycherley and his publisher), and then without dedicatory verses by his friends.

LETTER TO JOHN DENNIS

c. March 1694

EPIC MACHINES—AN ATTACK ON RYMER—PINDARICS

Text: the letter, of which there is no ms., survives in Dennis's illustration of the art of letter-writing, *Letters upon Several Occasions Written by and between Mr Dryden, Mr Wycherley, Mr ——, Mr Congreve, and Mr Dennis* (1696), pp. 53f.; *Ward*, no. 31.

The only one of Dryden's letters to be published in his lifetime, this letter is dated only by one of Dennis's letters to Dryden in the same collection, marked as 3 March 1694, to which it appears to be a reply. It shows a Dryden already intent upon the task of translating all Virgil, and still embittered by Rymer's attack upon Shakespeare in *A Short View of Tragedy* (1693).

My dear Mr Dennis,

When I read a letter so full of my commendations as your last, I cannot but consider you as a master of a vast treasure who, having more than enough for yourself, are forced to ebb out upon your friends. You have indeed the best right to give them, since you have them in propriety; but they are no more mine when I receive them than the light of the moon can be allowed to be her own who shines but by the reflexion of her brother. Your own poetry is a more powerful example to prove that the modern writers may enter into comparison with the Ancients than any which Perrault[1] could produce in France; yet neither he, nor you, who are a better critic,[2] can persuade me that there is any room left

[1] Charles Perrault, *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes* (1688-97), a defence of the superiority of modern literature over the ancient which provoked the Phalaris controversy between Sir William Temple and Richard Bentley and, eventually, Swift's *Battle between Ancient and Modern Books* (1704). Dryden had always been rather indifferent to the controversy.

[2] John Dennis (1657-1734) had recently published his first critical work, *The Impartial Critic: or Some Observations upon 'A Short View of Tragedy' by Mr Rymer*, which appeared in the same year as Dryden's attack upon Rymer in *Examen poeticum* (1693). See pp. 159-60, above.

for a solid commendation at this time of day, at least for me.

If I undertake the translation of Virgil,[1] the little which I can perform will shew at least that no man is fit to write after him in a barbarous modern tongue. Neither will his machines be of any service to a Christian poet. We see how ineffectually they have been tried by Tasso and by Ariosto. 'Tis using them too dully if we only make devils of his gods: as if, for example, I would raise a storm, and make use of Æolus, with this only difference of calling him Prince of the Air. What invention of mine would there be in this; or who would not see Virgil through me; only the same trick played over again by a bungling juggler? Boileau has well observed that it is an easy matter in a Christian poem for God to bring the Devil to reason.[2] I think I have given a better hint for new machines in my preface to Juvenal,[3] where I have particularly recommended two subjects, one of King Arthur's conquest of the Saxons, and the other of the Black Prince in his conquest of Spain. But the guardian angels of Monarchies and Kingdoms are not to be touched by every hand. A man must be deeply conversant in the Platonic philosophy to deal with them: and therefore I may reasonably expect that no poet of our age will presume to handle those machines for fear of discovering his own ignorance; or if he should, he might perhaps be ingrateful enough not to own me for his benefactor.

After I have confessed thus much of our modern heroic poetry, I cannot but conclude with Mr Rym[er] that our English comedy is far beyond any thing of the Ancients.[4] And notwithstanding our irregularities, so is our tragedy. Shakespeare had a genius for it; and we know, in spite of Mr R——, that genius alone is a greater virtue (if I may so call it) than all other qualifications put together. You see what success this learned critic has found in the world, after his blaspheming Shakespeare. Almost all the faults which he has discovered are truly there; yet who will read Mr Rym[er] or not read Shakespeare? For my own part, I reverence Mr Rym[er]'s learning, but I detest his ill nature and his arrogance. I indeed, and such as I, have reason to be afraid of him, but Shakespeare has not.

[1] The contract with Tonson was not signed till June 1694.
[2] *L'art poétique* (1674), III.193f. [3] Cf. pp. 91-2, above.
[4] Rymer concludes his *Short View*, which is an attack upon all modern tragedy, with this concession: 'And yet for modern comedy, doubtless our English are the best in the world' (*Critical Works*, ed. Zimansky, p. 175).

There is another part of poetry in which the English stand almost upon an equal foot with the Ancients, and 'tis that which we call Pindaric,[1] introduced but not perfected by our famous Mr Cowley: and of this, Sir, you are certainly one of the greatest masters. You have the sublimity of sense as well as sound, and know how far the boldness of a poet may lawfully extend. I could wish you would cultivate this kind of ode, and reduce it either to the same measures which Pindar used, or give new measures of your own. For, as it is, it looks like a vast tract of land newly discovered. The soil is wonderfully fruitful, but unmanured, overstocked with inhabitants, but almost all salvages, without laws, arts, arms, or policy.

I remember poor Nat. Lee, who was then upon the verge of madness, yet made a sober and a witty answer to a bad poet, who told him, "It was an easy thing to write like a madman." "No," said he, " 'tis very difficult to write like a madman, but 'tis a very easy matter to write like a fool." Otway and he are safe by death from all attacks, but we poor Poets Militant (to use Mr Cowley's expression) are at the mercy of wretched scribblers. And when they cannot fasten upon our verses, they fall upon our morals, our principles of state and religion.

For my principles of religion, I will not justify them to you. I know yours are far different. For the same reason, I will say nothing of my principles of state. I believe you in yours follow the dictates of your reason, as I in mine do those of my conscience. If I thought myself in an error, I would retract it; I am sure that I suffer for them; and Milton makes even the Devil say that no creature is in love with pain.[2] For my morals, betwixt man and man, I am not to be my own judge. I appeal to the world if I have ever deceived or defrauded any man. And for my private conversation, they who see me every day can be the best witnesses whether or no it be blameless and inoffensive. Hitherto I have no reason to complain that men of either party shun my company. I have never been an impudent beggar at the doors of noblemen: my visits have indeed been too rare to

[1] Pindar's odes are in fact regularly composed of strophe, antistrophe, and epode; but for his seventeenth-century English imitators, beginning with Cowley in his *Poems* (1656), a 'Pindaric' is an ode of unequal stanzas and in lines of unequal length. Dennis took Dryden's advice, and on the death of Mary II in the following year composed *The Court of Death: a Pindaric Poem to the Memory of Queen Mary* (1695).

[2] *Paradise Lost*, VI.462.

be unacceptable, and but just enough to testify my gratitude for their bounty, which I have frequently received, but always unasked, as themselves will witness.

I have written more than I needed to you on this subject: for I dare say you justify me to yourself. As for that which I first intended for the principal subject of this letter, which is my friend's passion and his design of marriage, on better consideration I have changed my mind. For having had the honour to see my dear friend Wycherley's letter to him on that occasion, I find nothing to be added or amended.[1] But as well as I love Mr Wycherley, I confess I love myself so well that I will not shew how much I am inferior to him in wit and judgment by undertaking any thing after him. There is Moses and the Prophets in his counsel. Jupiter and Juno, as the poets[2] tell us, made Tiresias their umpire in a certain merry dispute which fell out in heaven betwixt them. Tiresias, you know, had been of both sexes, and therefore was a proper judge; our friend Mr Wycherley is full as competent an arbitrator: he has been a bachelor, and married man, and is now a widower.[3] Virgil says of Ceneus:

> nunc vir, nunc faemina Ceneus
> rursus et in veterem fato revoluta figuram.[4]

Yet I suppose he will not give any large commendations to his middle state: nor, as the sailor said, will be fond after a shipwreck to put to sea again. If my friend will adventure after this, I can but wish him a good wind, as being his and,

my dear Mr Dennis,
your most affectionate
and most faithful servant,
JOHN DRYDEN.

[1] Perhaps the friend was William Walsh, who did indeed remain a bachelor.
[2] E.g. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, III.320f.
[3] Wycherley had lost Court favour by secretly marrying the Countess of Drogheda in 1680.
[4] *Aeneid*, VI.447-9:

> his Laodamia
> it comes et iuvenis quondam, nunc femina, Caeneus
> rursus et in veterem fato revoluta figuram.

Dryden translated the passage:

> Caeneus, a woman once, and once a man;
> But ending in the sex she first began (VI.608-9).

PREFACE OF THE TRANSLATOR, WITH A PARALLEL OF POETRY AND PAINTING

Prefixed to *De arte graphica: the Art of Painting, by C. A. du Fresnoy, Translated by Mr Dryden* (1695)

PERFECT NATURE—EPIC HEROES—COMEDY—IMITATION (INVENTION, DISPOSITION, COLOURING)

Text: 4°, 1695.

This is the first treatise by an English poet on the visual arts. The quarto, which appeared in the spring of 1695, consists of the text of the Latin poem *De arte graphica* (1668) by Charles Alphonse du Fresnoy (1611-65)—an elegant, if unoriginal, account of the painter's art written in Rome by the French painter and critic between 1633 and 1653; together with Dryden's prose translation, notes based on the French edition of the poem by Fresnoy's friend Roger de Piles (1668), and Dryden's extensive preface.

Ut pictura, poesis (*Ars poetica*, l. 361)—the familiar Renaissance doctrine, based upon tags from Horace and Plutarch, that poetry and painting are parallel arts is explicit in Fresnoy's opening lines (ll. 1-16): he calls a poem a '*pictura loquens*,' a speaking picture, and de Piles in his commentary enlarges upon the claim. Dryden's preface, which admits the doctrine in its very title, is largely a commentary on the poem with revealing personal asides, though Dryden, borrowing two months from his translation of Virgil to fulfil the commission, naturally emphasizes the epic parallels of painting, whereas Fresnoy had considered the dramatic. But Dryden's knowledge of painting was unfortunately slight: he never left England, and the vast collections of Italian paintings once acquired by Charles I and other English patrons had been largely dispersed while he was a boy, during the Civil War and the Commonwealth. The merits of the 'Parallel' are only occasional ones: Johnson, in his Life of Dryden, sensibly calls it 'a miscellaneous collection of critical remarks, such as cost a mind stored like his no labour to produce them.' But Pope admired the book, and in his 'Epistle to Mr [Charles] Jervas, with Mr Dryden's Translation of Fresnoy's *Art of Painting*' (1717) he calls on his painter-friend to

> Read these instructive leaves, in which conspire
> Fresnoy's close art, and Dryden's native fire
> (ll. 7-8).

The Latin poem was reprinted in England in 1783, with a new verse translation by William Mason and notes by Sir Joshua Reynolds; but Mason is more reserved concerning the merits of Dryden's version in his introductory 'Epistle to Reynolds':

> His pen in haste the hireling task to close,
> Transform'd the studied strain to careless prose
> Which, fondly lending faith to French pretence,
> Mistook its meaning, or obscur'd its sense.

It may be reasonably expected that I should say something on my own behalf in respect to my present undertaking. First, then, the reader may be pleased to know that it was not of my own choice that I undertook this work. Many of our most skilful painters, and other artists, were pleased to recommend this author to me as one who perfectly understood the rules of painting; who gave the best and most concise instructions for performance, and the surest to inform the judgment of all who loved this noble art; that they who before were rather fond of it, than knowingly admired it, might defend their inclination by their reason; that they might understand those excellencies which they blindly valued, so as not to be farther imposed on by bad pieces, and to know when nature was well imitated by the most able masters. 'Tis true, indeed, and they acknowledge it, that beside the rules which are given in this treatise, or which can be given in any other, that to make a perfect judgment of good pictures, and to value them more or less when compared with one another, there is farther required a long conversation with the best pieces, which are not very frequent either in France or England; yet some we have, not only from the hands of Holbein, Rubens, and Van Dyck (one of them admirable for history-painting, and the other two for portraits), but of many Flemish masters, and those not inconsiderable, though for design not equal to the Italians. And of these latter also, we are not unfurnished with some pieces of Raphael, Titian, Correggio, Michael Angelo, and others.

But to return to my own undertaking of this translation, I freely own that I thought myself uncapable of performing it, either to their satisfaction, or my own credit. Not but that I understood the original Latin, and the French author, perhaps as well as most Englishmen. But I was not sufficiently versed in

the terms of art, and therefore thought that many of those persons who put this honourable task on me were more able to perform it themselves, as undoubtedly they were. But they assuring me of their assistance in correcting my faults where I spoke improperly, I was encouraged to attempt it, that I might not be wanting in what I could, to satisfy the desires of so many gentlemen who were willing to give the world this useful work. They have effectually performed their promise to me, and I have been as careful, on my side, to take their advice in all things; so that the reader may assure himself of a tolerable translation. Not elegant, for I proposed not that to myself, but familiar, clear, and instructive. In any of which parts, if I have failed, the fault lies wholly at my door. In this one particular only, I must beg the reader's pardon. The prose translation of this poem is not free from poetical expressions, and I dare not promise that some of them are not fustian, or at least highly metaphorical; but this being a fault in the first digestion (that is, the original Latin), was not to be remedied in the second, *viz.* the translation. And I may confidently say that whoever had attempted it must have fallen into the same inconvenience; or a much greater, that of a false version.

When I undertook this work, I was already engaged in the translation of Virgil, from whom I have borrowed only two months; and am now returning to that which I ought to understand better. In the mean time I beg the reader's pardon for entertaining him so long with myself: 'tis an usual part of ill manners in all authors, and almost in all mankind, to trouble others with their business; and I was so sensible of it beforehand that I had not now committed it, unless some concernments of the reader's had been interwoven with my own. But I know not, while I am atoning for one error, if I am not falling into another; for I have been importuned to say something farther of this art; and to make some observations on it, in relation to the likeness and agreement which it has with poetry, its sister.

[Long quotations in translation follow, mainly from Giovanni Bellori (*c.* 1615-96), *Vite de pittori, scultori, ed architetti moderni* (1672).]

The business of his preface is to prove that a learned painter should form to himself an idea of perfect nature. This image he

is to set before his mind in all his undertakings, and to draw from thence, as from a storehouse, the beauties which are to enter into his work; thereby correcting nature from what actually she is in individuals, to what she ought to be, and what she was created. Now, as this idea of perfection is of little use in portraits (or the resemblances of particular persons), so neither is it in the characters of comedy and tragedy, which are never to be made perfect, but always to be drawn with some specks of frailty and deficience; such as they have been described to us in history, if they were real characters, or such as the poet began to shew them at their first appearance, if they were only fictitious (or imaginary). The perfection of such stage-characters consists chiefly in their likeness to the deficient faulty nature, which is their original. Only as it is observed more at large hereafter, in such cases there will always be found a better likeness and a worse, and the better is constantly to be chosen: I mean in tragedy, which represents the figures of the highest form amongst mankind. Thus in portraits, the painter will not take that side of the face which has some notorious blemish in it; but either draw it in profile (as Apelles did Antigonus, who had lost one of his eyes), or else shadow the more imperfect side. For an ingenious flattery is to be allowed to the professors of both arts, so long as the likeness is not destroyed. 'Tis true that all manner of imperfections must not be taken away from the characters; and the reason is, that there may be left some grounds of pity for their misfortunes. We can never be grieved for their miseries who are thoroughly wicked, and have thereby justly called their calamities on themselves. Such men are the natural objects of our hatred, not of our commiseration. If, on the other side, their characters were wholly perfect (such as, for example, the character of a saint or martyr in a play), his or her misfortunes would produce impious thoughts in the beholders; they would accuse the heavens of injustice, and think of leaving a religion where piety was so ill requited.[1] I say the greater part would be tempted so to do, I say not that they ought; and the consequence is too dangerous for the practice. In this I have accused myself for my own *St Catherine*;[2] but let truth prevail. Sophocles has taken the just medium in his Oedipus. He is some-

[1] For Rymer's doctrine of poetic justice, cf. vol. I, p. 245n., above.
[2] I.e. *Tyrannic Love* (1670).

what arrogant at his first entrance, and is too inquisitive through the whole tragedy; yet these imperfections being balanced by great virtues, they hinder not our compassion for his miseries; neither yet can they destroy that horror which the nature of his crimes has excited in us. Such in painting are the warts and moles which, adding a likeness to the face, are not therefore to be omitted. But these produce no loathing in us. But how far to proceed, and where to stop, is left to the judgment of the poet and the painter. In comedy there is somewhat more of the worse likeness to be taken, because that is often to produce laughter, which is occasioned by the sight of some deformity; but for this I refer the reader to Aristotle.[1] 'Tis a sharp manner of instruction for the vulgar, who are never well amended till they are more than sufficiently exposed.

That I may return to the beginning of this remark concerning perfect ideas, I have only this to say that the parallel is often true in epic poetry. The heroes of the poets are to be drawn according to this rule. There is scarce a frailty to be left in the best of them; any more than is to be found in a divine nature. And if Æneas sometimes weeps, it is not in bemoaning his own miseries, but those which his people undergo. If this be an imperfection, the Son of God, when he was incarnate, shed tears of compassion over Jerusalem. And Lentulus describes him often weeping, but never laughing;[2] so that Virgil is justified even from the Holy Scriptures. I have but one word more, which for once I will anticipate from the author of this book. Though it must be an idea of perfection from which both the epic poet and the history painter draws, yet all perfections are not suitable to all subjects; but every one must be designed according to that perfect beauty which is proper to him. An Apollo must be distinguished from a Jupiter, a Pallas from a Venus; and so, in poetry, an Æneas from any other hero; for piety is his chief perfection. Homer's Achilles is a kind of exception to this rule: but then he is not a perfect hero, nor so intended by the poet. All his gods had somewhat of human imperfection, for which he has been taxed by Plato[3] as an imitator of what was bad. But Virgil observed his fault, and mended it. Yet Achilles was perfect

[1] *Poetics*, ch. v.

[2] Luke 19.41; Lentulus is the supposed author of the apocryphal Epistle to the Roman Senate.

[3] *Republic*, ch. ix.

in the strength of his body, and the vigour of his mind. Had he been less passionate, or less revengeful, the poet well foresaw that Hector had been killed, and Troy taken, at the first assault; which had destroyed the beautiful contrivance of his *Iliads*, and the moral of preventing discord amongst confederate princes, which was his principal intention. For the moral (as Bossu observes) is the first business of the poet, as being the groundwork of his instruction. This being formed, he contrives such a design, or fable, as may be most suitable to the moral. After this he begins to think of the persons whom he is to employ in carrying on his design; and gives them the manners which are most proper to their several characters. The thoughts and words are the last parts, which give beauty and colouring to the piece. When I say that the manners of the hero ought to be good in perfection, I contradict not the Marquess of Normanby's opinion, in that admirable verse where, speaking of a perfect character, calls it *a faultless monster, which the world ne'er knew.*[1] For that excellent critic intended only to speak of dramatic characters, and not of epic.

Thus at least I have shewn that in the most perfect poem, which is that of Virgil, a perfect idea was required and followed. And consequently that all succeeding poets ought rather to imitate him than even Homer. I will now proceed, as I promised, to the author of this book. He tells you almost in the first lines of it, that 'the chief end of painting is, to please the eyes; and 'tis one great end of poetry to please the mind.' Thus far the parallel of the arts hold true: with this difference, that the principal end of painting is to please, and the chief design of poetry is to instruct. In this the latter seems to have the advantage of the former. But if we consider the artists themselves on both sides, certainly their aims are the very same: they would both make sure of pleasing, and that in preference to instruction. Next, the means of this pleasure is by deceit. One imposes on the sight, and the other on the understanding. Fiction is of the essence of poetry, as well as of painting; there is a resemblance in one, of human bodies, things, and actions which are not real,

[1] John Sheffield (1648-1721), *An Essay upon Poetry* (1682):

Reject that vulgar error which appears
So fair, of making perfect characters;
There's no such thing in nature, and you'll draw
A faultless monster, which the world ne'er saw.

and in the other, of a true story by a fiction.[1] And as all stories are not proper subjects for an epic poem or a tragedy, so neither are they for a noble picture. The subjects both of the one, and of the other, ought to have nothing of immoral, low, or filthy in them; but this being treated at large in the book itself, I waive it to avoid repetition. Only I must add that though Catullus, Ovid, and others were of another opinion, that the subject of poets, and even their thoughts and expressions, might be loose, provided their lives were chaste and holy, yet there are no such licences permitted in that art, any more than in painting, to design and colour obscene nudities. *Vita proba est*[2] is no excuse, for it will scarcely be admitted that either a poet or a painter can be chaste, who give us the contrary examples in their writings and their pictures. We see nothing of this kind in Virgil: that which comes the nearest to it is the adventure of the cave, where Dido and Æneas were driven by the storm;[3] yet even there the poet pretends a marriage before the consummation, and Juno herself was present at it. Neither is there any expression in that story which a Roman matron might not read without a blush. Besides, the poet passes it over as hastily as he can, as if he were afraid of staying in the cave with the two lovers, and of being a witness to their actions. Now I suppose that a painter would not be much commended who should pick out this cavern from the whole *Æneids*, when there is not another in the work. He had better leave them in their obscurity than let in a flash of lightning to clear the natural darkness of the place, by which he must discover himself as much as them. The altar-pieces and holy decorations of painting show that art may be applied to better uses, as well as poetry. And amongst many other instances, that Farnesian gallery, painted by Hannibal Caracci, is a sufficient witness yet remaining; the whole work being morally instructive and particularly the Herculis Bivium, which is a perfect triumph of virtue over vice; as it is wonderfully well described by the ingenious Bellori.

Hitherto I have only told the reader what ought not to be the subject of a picture or of a poem. What it ought to be on

[1] Lessing, in his notes for *Laokoon* (1766), condemned this parallel as a 'false transference of the painter's ideal into poetry. In the former, it is an ideal of bodies: in the latter, it must be an ideal of plots.' Cf. *Laokoon*, ed. H. Blümner (1880), pp. 399f.

[2] Martial, I.v: 'His life is upright.'

[3] *Aeneid*, IV.160f.

either side, our author tells us: it must in general be great and noble; and in this the parallel is exactly true. The subject of a poet, either in tragedy or in an epic poem, is a great action of some illustrious hero. 'Tis the same in painting; not every action, nor every person, is considerable enough to enter into the cloth. It must be the anger of an Achilles, the piety of an Æneas, the sacrifice of an Iphigenia (for heroines as well as heroes are comprehended in the rule); but the parallel is more complete in tragedy than in an epic poem. For as a tragedy may be made out of many particular episodes of Homer or of Virgil, so may a noble picture be designed out of this or that particular story in either author. History is also fruitful of designs both for the painter and the tragic poet: Curtius throwing himself into a gulph, and the two Decii sacrificing themselves for the safety of their country, are subjects for tragedy and picture. Such is Scipio restoring the Spanish bride whom he either loved, or may be supposed to love; by which he gained the hearts of a great nation to interess themselves for Rome against Carthage.[1] These are all but particular pieces in Livy's *History*; and yet are full complete subjects for the pen and pencil. Now the reason of this is evident. Tragedy and picture are more narrowly circumscribed by the mechanic rules of times and place than the epic poem. The time of this last is left indefinite. 'Tis true, Homer took up only the space of eight-and-forty days for his *Iliads*; but whether Virgil's action was comprehended in a year, or somewhat more, is not determined by Bossu. Homer made the place of his action Troy, and the Grecian camp besieging it. Virgil introduces his Æneas sometimes in Sicily, sometimes in Carthage, and other times at Cumæ, before he brings him to Laurentum; and even after that, he wanders again to the kingdom of Evander, and some parts of Tuscany, before he returns to finish the war by the death of Turnus. But tragedy, according to the practice of the Ancients, was always confined within the compass of twenty-four hours, and seldom takes up so much time. As for the place of it, it was always one, and that not in a larger sense (as for example, a whole city, or two or three several houses in it), but the market, or some other public place, common to the chorus and all the actors. Which established law of theirs I have not an opportunity to examine in this place,

[1] *Livy*, VII.vi; X.xxix; XXVIII.xliif.

because I cannot do it without digression from my subject; though it seems too strict at the first appearance, because it excludes all secret intrigues, which are the beauties of the modern stage; for nothing can be carried on with privacy when the chorus is supposed to be always present. But to proceed; I must say this to the advantage of painting, even above tragedy, that what this last represents in the space of many hours, the former shows us in one moment. The action, the passion, and the manners of so many persons as are contained in a picture are to be discerned at once, in the twinkling of an eye; at least they would be so, if the sight could travel over so many different objects all at once, or the mind could digest them all at the same instant, or point of time. Thus, in the famous picture of Poussin which represents the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament,[1] you see our Saviour and his twelve disciples all concurring in the same action, after different manners, and in different postures, only the manners of Judas are distinguished from the rest. Here is but one indivisible point of time observed; but one action performed by so many persons, in one room and at the same table; yet the eye cannot comprehend at once the whole object, nor the mind follow it so fast; 'tis considered at leisure, and seen by intervals. Such are the subjects of noble pictures; and such are only to be undertaken by noble hands.

There are other parts of nature which are meaner, and yet are the subjects both of painters and of poets. For, to proceed in the parallel, as comedy is a representation of human life in inferior persons, and low subjects, and by that means creeps into the nature of poetry, and is a kind of juniper, a shrub belonging to the species of cedar, so is the painting of clowns, the representation of a Dutch kermis, the brutal sport of snick-or-snee, and a thousand other things of this mean invention, a kind of picture

[1] I.e. the Last Supper. There is no likelihood that any painting by Nicolas Poussin (1594?-1665) ever reached England in the seventeenth century. But Dryden may have seen some of the hundreds of engravings of his pictures then circulating. Cf. Georges Wildenstein, 'Les gravures de Poussin au xvii^e siècle,' *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (September-December 1955), pp. 77f. Unfortunately, Dryden's account hardly fits the Eucharist in either of Poussin's two series on the Sacraments. In the first version (*Wildenstein*, plate 92) which seems the likelier, Judas is scarcely distinguished from the other apostles at the table, and in the second he is walking out of the room at the back on the right. A third Eucharist by Poussin, a large painting now in the Louvre (*Wildenstein*, plate 66B), shows apostles standing and kneeling, but Judas is again difficult to identify.

which belongs to nature but of the lowest form. Such is a lazar in comparison to a Venus: both are drawn in human figures; they have faces alike, though not like faces. There is yet a lower sort of poetry and painting, which is out of nature; for a farce is that in poetry, which grotesque is in a picture. The persons and action of a farce are all unnatural, and the manners false, that is, inconsisting with the characters of mankind. Grotesque painting is the just resemblance of this; and Horace begins his *Art of Poetry* by describing such a figure, with a man's head, a horse's neck, the wings of a bird, and a fish's tail; parts of different species jumbled together, according to the mad imagination of the dauber; and the end of all this, as he tells you afterward, to cause laughter: a very monster in a Bartholomew Fair, for the mob to gape at for their two-pence. Laughter is indeed the propriety of a man, but just enough to distinguish him from his elder brother with four legs. 'Tis a kind of bastard-pleasure too, taken in at the eyes of the vulgar gazers, and at the ears of the beastly audience. Church-painters use it to divert the honest countryman at public prayers, and keep his eyes open at a heavy sermon. And farce-scribblers make use of the same noble invention to entertain citizens, country-gentlemen, and Covent Garden fops.[1] If they are merry, all goes well on the poet's side. The better sort go thither too, but in despair of sense and the just images of nature, which are the adequate pleasures of the mind. But the author can give the stage no better than what was given him by nature; and the actors must represent such things as they are capable to perform, and by which both they and the scribbler may get their living. After all, 'tis a good thing to laugh at any rate, and if a straw can tickle a man, 'tis an instrument of happiness. Beasts can weep when they suffer, but they cannot laugh. And as Sir William Davenant observes in his Preface to *Gondibert*, ''Tis the wisdom of a government to permit plays' (he might have added farces), 'as 'tis the prudence of a carter to put bells upon his horses, to make them carry their burthens cheerfully.'[2]

[1] I.e. fools. But the modern sense (*OED*.3: 'one who is foolishly vain of his appearance') is recorded as early as the 1670's.

[2] 'And he that means to govern so mournfully (as it were, without any music in his dominion) must lay but light burdens on his subjects; or else he wants the ordinary wisdom of those who, to their beasts that are much loaden, whistle all the day to encourage their travail.'

I have already shewn that one main end of poetry and painting is to please, and have said something of the kinds of both, and of their subjects, in which they bear a great resemblance to each other. I must now consider them, as they are great and noble arts; and as they are arts, they must have rules, which may direct them to their common end.

To all arts and sciences, but more particularly to these, may be applied what Hippocrates says of physic, as I find him cited by an eminent French critic:[1] 'Medicine has long subsisted in the world. The principles of it are certain, and it has a certain way; by both which there has been found, in the course of many ages, an infinite number of things, the experience of which has confirmed its usefulness and goodness. All that is wanting to the perfection of this art will undoubtedly be found, if able men, and such as are instructed in the ancient rules, will make a farther inquiry into it, and endeavour to arrive at that which is hitherto unknown, by that which is already known. But all who, having rejected the ancient rules, and taken the opposite ways, yet boast themselves to be masters of this art, do but deceive others, and are themselves deceived; for that is absolutely impossible.'

This is notoriously true in these two arts; for the way to please being to imitate nature, both the poets and the painters in ancient times, and in the best ages, have studied her; and from the practice of both these arts, the rules have been drawn by which we are instructed how to please, and to compass that end which they obtained by following their example. For nature is still the same in all ages, and can never be contrary to herself. Thus, from the practice of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, Aristotle drew his rules for tragedy; and Philostratus for painting. Thus, amongst the moderns, the Italian and French critics, by studying the precepts of Aristotle and Horace, and having the example of the Grecian poets before their eyes, have given us the rules of modern tragedy; and thus the critics of the same countries in the art of painting have given the precepts of perfecting that art. 'Tis true that poetry has one advantage over painting in these last ages, that we have still the remaining examples both of the Greek and Latin poets; whereas the painters have nothing left them from Apelles, Protogenes, Parrhasius,

[1] André Dacier, in the preface to his translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* (1693).

Zeuxis, and the rest, but only the testimonies which are given of their incomparable works. But instead of this, they have some of their best statues, bass-relievos, columns, obelisks, etc. which were saved out of the common ruin, and are still preserved in Italy; and by well distinguishing what is proper to sculpture, and what to painting, and what is common to them both, they have judiciously repaired that loss. And the great genius of Raphael, and others, having succeeded to the times of barbarism and ignorance, the knowledge of painting is now arrived to a supreme perfection, though the performance of it is much declined in the present age. The greatest age for poetry amongst the Romans was certainly that of Augustus Cæsar: and yet we are told that painting was then at its lowest ebb, and perhaps sculpture was also declining at the same time. In the reign of Domitian, and some who succeeded him, poetry was but meanly cultivated, but painting eminently flourished. I am not here to give the history of the two arts; how they were both in a manner extinguished by the irruption of the barbarous nations, and both restored about the times of Leo the Tenth, Charles the Fifth, and Francis the First; though I might observe that neither Ariosto, nor any of his contemporary poets, ever arrived at the excellency of Raphael, Titian, and the rest, in painting. But in revenge, at this time, or lately, in many countries, poetry is better practised than her sister-art. To what height the magnificence and encouragement of the present King of France may carry painting and sculpture is uncertain; but by what he has done before the war in which he is engaged, we may expect what he will do after the happy conclusion of a peace, which is the prayer and wish of all those who have not an interest to prolong the miseries of Europe.[1] For 'tis most certain, as our author, amongst others, has observed, that reward is the spur of virtue, as well in all good arts as in all laudable attempts; and emulation, which is the other spur, will never be wanting, either amongst poets or painters, when particular rewards and prizes are proposed to the best deservers.

[1] Louis XIV's patronage of the arts had begun in 1665, when he appointed Charles Le Brun to direct the decoration of the Galerie d'Apollon in the Louvre. War consumed nearly all of the last quarter of a century of his long reign (1643-1715): the War of the League of Augsburg (1689-97) against William III was followed after a few years by the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-13).

But to return from this digression, though it was almost necessary: all the rules of painting are methodically, concisely, and yet clearly delivered in this present treatise which I have translated. Bossu has not given more exact rules for the epic poem, nor Dacier for tragedy, in his late excellent translation of Aristotle, and his notes upon him, than our Fresnoy has made for painting; with the parallel of which I must resume my discourse, following my author's text,[1] though with more brevity than I intended, because Virgil calls me.

'The principal and most important part of painting' is to know what 'is most beautiful in nature, and most proper for that art': that which is the most beautiful is the most noble subject: so in poetry, tragedy is more beautiful than comedy; because, as I said, the persons are greater whom the poet instructs, and consequently the instructions of more benefit to mankind: the action is likewise greater and more noble, and thence is derived the greater and more noble pleasure.

To imitate nature well in whatsoever subject is the perfection of both arts; and that picture, and that poem, which comes nearest to the resemblance of nature is the best. But it follows not that what pleases most in either kind is therefore good, but what ought to please. Our depraved appetites, and ignorance of the arts, mislead our judgments, and cause us often to take that for true imitation of nature which has no resemblance of nature in it. To inform our judgments, and to reform our tastes, rules were invented, that by them we might discern when nature was imitated, and how nearly. I have been forced to recapitulate these things, because mankind is not more liable to deceit than it is willing to continue in a pleasing error, strengthened by a long habitude. The imitation of nature is therefore justly constituted as the general, and indeed the only, rule of pleasing, both in poetry and painting. Aristotle tells us that imitation pleases, because it affords matter for a reasoner to inquire into the truth or falsehood of imitation, by comparing its likeness, or unlikeness, with the original.[2] But by this rule, every speculation in nature whose truth falls under the inquiry of a philosopher, must produce the same delight, which is not true. I should rather assign another reason. Truth is the object of our understanding, as good is of our will; and the understanding

[1] *De arte graphica*, ll. 37f.   [2] *Poetics*, ch. iv.

can no more be delighted with a lie than the will can choose an apparent evil. As truth is the end of all our speculations, so the discovery of it is the pleasure of them; and since a true knowledge of nature gives us pleasure, a lively imitation of it, either in poetry or painting, must of necessity produce a much greater. For both these arts, as I said before, are not only true imitations of nature, but of the best nature, of that which is wrought up to a nobler pitch. They present us with images more perfect than the life in any individual; and we have the pleasure to see all the scattered beauties of nature united by a happy chemistry, without its deformities or faults. They are imitations of the passions which always move, and therefore consequently please; for without motion there can be no delight, which cannot be considered but as an active passion. When we view these elevated ideas of nature, the result of that view is admiration, which is always the cause of pleasure.

This foregoing remark, which gives the reason why imitation pleases, was sent me by Mr Walter Moyle,[1] a most ingenious young gentleman, conversant in all the studies of humanity much above his years. He had also furnished me (according to my request) with all the particular passages in Aristotle and Horace which are used by them to explain the art of poetry by that of painting; which, if ever I have time to retouch this essay, shall be inserted in their places.

Having thus shewn that imitation pleases, and why it pleases in both these arts, it follows that some rules of imitation are necessary to obtain the end; for without rules there can be no art, any more than there can be a house without a door to conduct you into it. The principal parts of painting and poetry next follow.

Invention[2] is the first part, and absolutely necessary to them both; yet no rule ever was or ever can be given how to compass it. A happy genius is the gift of nature: it depends on the influence of the stars, say the astrologers, on the organs of the body, say the naturalists; 'tis the particular gift of Heaven, say

[1] Walter Moyle (1672-1711) was one of the translators of the 1711 Lucian, to which Dryden contributed the Life of Lucian, below.

[2] The three 'parts' of poetry and painting (invention, disposition, colouring) are strikingly like the three 'happinesses' (invention, fancy, elocution) of the poet's imagination enumerated in the preface to *Annus Mirabilis* (1667). Together, the two passages represent almost all we have of abstract speculation by Dryden on the creative act.

the divines, both Christians and heathens. How to improve it, many books can teach us; how to obtain it, none; that nothing can be done without it, all agree.

tu nihil invita dices faciesve Minerva.[1]

Without invention a painter is but a copier, and a poet but a plagiary of others. Both are allowed sometimes to copy and translate; but, as our author tells you, that is not the best part of their reputation. 'Imitators are but a servile kind of cattle,' says the poet; or at best, the keepers of cattle for other men. They have nothing which is properly their own: that is a sufficient mortification for me while I am translating Virgil. But to copy the best author is a kind of praise, if I perform it as I ought; as a copy after Raphael is more to be commended than an original of any indifferent painter.

Under this head of invention is placed the disposition of the work; to put all things in a beautiful order and harmony, that the whole may be of a piece. The compositions of the painter should be conformable to the text of ancient authors, to the customs and the times. And this is exactly the same in poetry: Homer and Virgil are to be our guides in the epic; Sophocles and Euripides in tragedy: in all things we are to imitate the customs and the times of those persons and things which we represent. Not to make new rules of the drama, as Lopez de Vega[2] has attempted unsuccessfully to do, but to be content to follow our masters, who understood nature better than we. But if the story which we treat be modern, we are to vary the customs, according to the time and the country where the scene of action lies; for this is still to imitate nature, which is always the same, though in a different dress.

As in the composition of a picture, the painter is to take care that nothing enter into it which is not proper or convenient to the subject, so likewise is the poet to reject all incidents which are foreign to his poem, and are naturally no parts of it; they are wens, and other excrescences, which belong not to the body, but deform it. No person, no incident in the piece, or in the play, but must be of use to carry on the main design. All things

[1] Horace, *Ars poetica*, l. 385: 'You will say and do nothing unless Minerva wishes it.'

[2] I.e. Lope de Vega (1562-1635), in his treatise *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* (1609).

else are like six fingers to the hand, when nature, which is superfluous in nothing, can do her work with five. A painter must reject all trifling ornaments; so must a poet refuse all tedious and unnecessary descriptions. A robe which is too heavy is less an ornament than a burthen.

In poetry Horace calls these things *versus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ*;[1] these are also the *lucus et ara Dianæ*,[2] which he mentions in the same *Art of Poetry*. But since there must be ornaments both in painting and poetry, if they are not necessary, they must at least be decent; that is, in their due place, and but moderately used. The painter is not to take so much pains about the drapery as about the face, where the principal resemblance lies; neither is the poet, who is working up a passion, to make similes, which will certainly make it languish. My Montezuma dies with a fine one in his mouth; but it is ambitious and out of season.[3] When there are more figures in a picture than are necessary, or at least ornamental, our author calls them *figures to be let*,[4] because the picture has no use of them. So I have seen in some modern plays above twenty actors, when the action has not required half the number. In the principal figures of a picture, the painter is to employ the sinews of his art; for in them consists the principal beauty of his work. Our author saves me the comparison with tragedy, for he says that herein he is to imitate the tragic poet who employs his utmost force in those places wherein consists the height and beauty of the action.

Du Fresnoy, whom I follow, makes *design*, or *drawing*, the second part of painting; but the rules which he gives concerning the posture of the figures are almost wholly proper to that art, and admit not any comparison, that I know, with poetry.

[1] *Ars poetica*, l. 322: 'verses lacking substance and sweet-sounding trifles.'

[2] *Ibid.*, l. 16: 'the grove and altar of Diana' (described by the bad poet as a purple patch).

[3] *The Indian Emperor* (1667), V.ii, where Montezuma stabs himself and dies with the words:

For pity only on fresh objects stays,
But with the tedious sight of woes decays.
Still less and less my boiling spirits flow,
And I grow stiff as cooling metals do:
Farewell, Almeria.

[4] Fresnoy condemns excessive ornament in painting (ll. 152f.), but not in these terms.

The posture of a poetic figure is, as I conceive, the description of his heroes in the performance of such or such an action: as of Achilles, just in the act of killing Hector; or of Æneas, who has Turnus under him. Both the poet and the painter vary the postures according to the action or passion which they represent of the same person. But all must be great and graceful in them. The same Æneas must be drawn a suppliant to Dido, with respect in his gestures, and humility in his eyes; but when he is forced, in his own defence, to kill Lausus, the poet shows him compassionate, and tempering the severity of his looks with a reluctance to the action which he is going to perform. He has pity on his beauty and his youth, and is loth to destroy such a masterpiece of nature. He considers Lausus rescuing his father at the hazard of his own life, as an image of himself when he took Anchises on his shoulders, and bore him safe through the rage of the fire, and the opposition of his enemies. And therefore, in the posture of a retiring man who avoids the combat, he stretches out his arm in sign of peace, with his right foot drawn a little back, and his breast bending inward, more like an orator than a soldier; and seems to dissuade the young man from pulling on his destiny, by attempting more than he was able to perform. Take the passage as I have thus translated it:

Shouts of applause ran ringing through the field,
To see the son the vanquish'd father shield:
All, fir'd with noble emulation,[1] strive,
And with a storm of darts to distance drive
The Trojan chief; who, held at bay, from far
On his Vulcanian orb sustain'd the war.
Æneas, thus o'erwhelm'd on every side,
Their first assault[2] undaunted did abide,
And thus to Lausus, loud with friendly threatening cry'd:
Why wilt thou rush to certain death, and rage,
In rash attempts, beyond thy tender age,
Betray'd by pious love?

And afterwards:

He griev'd, he wept; the sight an image brought
Of his own filial love; a sadly pleasing thought.[3]

But beside the outlines of the posture, the design of the picture comprehends in the next place the forms of faces which

[1] The 1697 Virgil has 'gen'rous indignation.'
[2] *Ibid.*, 'the storm of darts.'
[3] *Aeneis*, X.1134-9, 1146-51, 1166-7.

are to be different; and so in a poem, or a play, must the several characters of the persons be distinguished from each other. I knew a poet[1] whom out of respect I will not name who, being too witty himself, could draw nothing but wits in a comedy of his; even his fools were infected with the disease of their author. They overflowed with smart repartees, and were only distinguished from the intended wits by being called coxcombs, though they deserved not so scandalous a name. Another,[2] who had a great genius for tragedy, following the fury of his natural temper, made every man and woman too in his plays stark raging mad; there was not a sober person to be had for love or money. All was tempestuous and blustering; heaven and earth were coming together at every word; a mere hurricane from the beginning to the end, and every actor seemed to be hastening on the day of judgment.

'Let every member be made for its own head,'[3] says our author; not a withered hand to a young face. So in the persons of a play, whatsoever is said or done by any of them must be consistent with the manners which the poet has given them distinctly; and even the habits must be proper to the degrees and humours of the persons, as well as in a picture. He who entered in the first act a young man, like Pericles, Prince of Tyre, must not be in danger, in the fifth act, of committing incest with his daughter; nor an usurer, without great probability and causes of repentance, be turned into a cutting Morecraft.[4]

[1] Dryden writes as if he knew the dramatist personally. But no Restoration writer of comedies before the 1690's (i.e. before Congreve and Vanburgh) quite conforms to this description. Perhaps Sir George Etherege (1635?-91), whose three comedies were published in 1664, 1668, and 1676, is the likeliest: he was a diplomat as well as a man of fashion, and had died in Ratisbon on a political mission, all of which may account for Dryden's prudential 'respect.' Certainly Dryden had known Etherege intimately: he had written an epilogue for the last of his comedies, *The Man of Mode* (1676), and one letter to Etherege survives (16 February 1687) in warmly affectionate terms (*Ward*, no. 13), addressing him as 'O thou immortal source of idleness.' In 1686 he had addressed a jocular verse epistle to Etherege in Ratisbon, 'To Sir George Etherege, Mr D.—— Answer,' urging him to write another comedy. But Dennis thought the reference was to Wycherley; cf. *Proposals* (1721), p. 23.

[2] Obviously Nathaniel Lee (1649?-92), who was certainly a friend of Dryden's before his confinement in Bedlam in 1684. They had collaborated in *Oedipus* (1679); cf. vol. I, pp. 232f., above.

[3] *De arte graphica*, l. 126.

[4] The usurer in *The Scornful Lady*; cf. *Of Dramatic Poesy*, vol. I, p. 54n., above.

I am not satisfied that the comparison betwixt the two arts in the last paragraph is altogether so just as it might have been; but I am sure of this which follows:

'The principal figure of the subject must appear in the midst of the picture, under the principal light, to distinguish it from the rest, which are only its attendants.'[1] Thus, in a tragedy or an epic poem, the hero of the piece must be advanced foremost to the view of the reader or spectator: he must outshine the rest of all the characters; he must appear the prince of them, like the sun in the Copernican system, encompassed with the less noble planets. Because the hero is the centre of the main action; all the lines from the circumference tend to him alone: he is the chief object of pity in the drama, and of admiration in the epic poem.

As in a picture, besides the principal figures which compose it, and are placed in the midst of it, there are less groups or knots of figures disposed at proper distances, which are parts of the piece, and seem to carry on the same design in a more inferior manner; so in epic poetry there are episodes, and a chorus in tragedy, which are members of the action, as growing out of it, not inserted into it. Such in the ninth book of the *Æneids* is the episode of Nisus and Euryalus. The adventure belongs to them alone; they alone are the objects of compassion and admiration; but their business which they carry on is the general concernment of the Trojan camp, then beleagured by Turnus and the Latins, as the Christians were lately by the Turks. They were to advertise the chief hero of the distresses of his subjects occasioned by his absence, to crave his succour, and solicit him to hasten his return.

The Grecian tragedy was at first nothing but a chorus of singers;[2] afterwards one actor was introduced, which was the poet himself, who entertained the people with a discourse in verse, betwixt the pauses of the singing. This succeeding with the people, more actors were added to make the variety the greater; and in process of time, the chorus only sung betwixt the acts, and the Coriphæus, or chief of them, spoke for the rest, as an actor concerned in the business of the play.

Thus tragedy was perfected by degrees; and being arrived at

[1] *De arte graphica*, ll. 129f.

[2] This account is derived from Aristotle, *Poetics*, ch. iv.

that perfection, the painters might probably take the hint from thence of adding groups to their pictures. But as a good picture may be without a group, so a good tragedy may subsist without a chorus: notwithstanding any reasons which have been given by Dacier to the contrary.[1]

Monsieur Racine has indeed used it in his *Esther*;[2] but not that he found any necessity of it, as the French critic would insinuate. The chorus at St Cyr was only to give the young ladies an occasion of entertaining the king with vocal music, and of commending their own voices. The play itself was never intended for the public stage, nor, without disparagement to the learned author, could possibly have succeeded there, and much less the translation of it here. Mr Wycherley, when we read it together, was of my opinion in this, or rather I of his; for it becomes me so to speak of so excellent a poet, and so great a judge. But since I am in this place, as Virgil says, *spatiis exclusus iniquis*,[3] that is, shortened in my time, I will give no other reason than that it is impracticable on our stage. A new theatre, much more ample and much deeper, must be made for that purpose, besides the cost of sometimes forty or fifty habits, which is an expense too large to be supplied by a company of actors. 'Tis true, I should not be sorry to see a chorus on a theatre more than as large and as deep again as ours, built and adorned at a king's charges; and on that condition, and another, which is that my hands were not bound behind me, as now they are, I should not despair of making such a tragedy as might be both instructive and delightful, according to the manner of the Grecians.[4]

To make a sketch, or a more perfect model of a picture, is, in the language of poets, to draw up the scenary[5] of a play, and the reason is the same for both: to guide the undertaking,

[1] Cf. p. 191n., above.

[2] A tragedy written in 1689 at the request of Mme de Maintenon for the pupils at her college at St Cyr.

[3] *Georgics*, IV.147.

[4] William III did not respond to this invitation to pay for a national theatre of radical design, and Dryden never returned to the theatre, his last play (a total failure) being *Love Triumphant* (1694).

[5] I.e. scenario, the term which supplanted it in the nineteenth century. Dryden evidently did not introduce 'scenary' in this sense, but the earliest recorded use occurs in his *Vindication* [*of*] *The Duke of Guise* (1683): 'I writ the first and third acts of *Oedipus*, and drew the scenery [*sic*] of the whole play.'

and to preserve the remembrance of such things whose natures are difficult to retain.

To avoid absurdities and incongruities, is the same law established for both arts. The painter is not to paint a cloud at the bottom of a picture, but in the uppermost parts; nor the poet to place what is proper to the end or middle, in the beginning of a poem. I might enlarge on this; but there are few poets or painters who can be supposed to sin so grossly against the laws of nature and of art. I remember only one play, and for once I will call it by its name, *The Slighted Maid*,[1] where there is nothing in the first act but what might have been said or done in the fifth; nor any thing in the midst, which might not have been placed as well in the beginning or the end. To express the passions which are seated in the heart by outward signs, is one great precept of the painters, and very difficult to perform. In poetry, the same passions and motions of the mind are to be expressed; and in this consists the principal difficulty, as well as the excellency of that art. This, says my author, is the gift of Jupiter; and, to speak in the same heathen language, we call it the gift of our Apollo: not to be obtained by pains or study, if we are not born to it; for the motions which are studied are never so natural as those which break out in the height of a real passion. Mr Otway possessed this part as thoroughly as any of the Ancients or Moderns. I will not defend every thing in his *Venice Preserved*;[2] but I must bear this testimony to his memory, that the passions are truly touched in it, though perhaps there is somewhat to be desired, both in the grounds of them and in the height and elegance of expression; but nature is there, which is the greatest beauty.

'In the passions,' says our author, 'we must have a very great regard to the quality of the persons who are actually possessed with them.' The joy of a monarch for the news of a victory must not be expressed like the ecstasy of a harlequin on the receipt of a letter from his mistress: this is so much the same in both the

[1] By Sir Robert Stapylton (1663); cf. 'Grounds,' vol. I, p. 244, above.

[2] Thomas Otway (1652-85), *Venice Preserved* (1682). Dryden's praise of Otway is reserved; Otway had been a friend of Shadwell's, and had complained of 'a certain writer that shall be nameless' who had condemned his *Don Carlos* (1676). But Dryden had written two prologues for special performances of *Venice Preserved* in 1682. Cf. *Macdonald*, pp. 211-12.

arts, that it is no longer a comparison. What he says of face-painting, or the portrait of any one particular person, concerning the likeness, is also as applicable to poetry. In the character of an hero, as well as in an inferior figure, there is a better or worse likeness to be taken: the better is a panegyric, if it be not false, and the worse is a libel. Sophocles, says Aristotle, always drew men as they ought to be, that is, better than they were; another, whose name I have forgotten, drew them worse than naturally they were. Euripides altered nothing in the character, but made them such as they were represented by history, epic poetry, or tradition. Of the three, the draught of Sophocles is most commended by Aristotle.[1] I have followed it in that part of *Oedipus* which I writ,[2] though perhaps I have made him too good a man. But my characters of Anthony and Cleopatra,[3] though they are favourable to them, have nothing of outrageous panegyric. Their passions were their own, and such as were given them by history; only the deformities of them were cast into shadows, that they might be objects of compassion; whereas if I had chosen a noon-day light for them, somewhat must have been discovered which would rather have moved our hatred than our pity.

The Gothic manner, and the barbarous ornaments which are to be avoided in a picture, are just the same with those in an ill-ordered play.[4] For example, our English tragi-comedy must be confessed to be wholly Gothic, notwithstanding the success which it has found upon our theatre, and in the *Pastor Fido* of Guarini;[5] even though Corisca and the Satyr contribute somewhat to the main action. Neither can I defend my *Spanish Friar*, as fond as otherwise I am of it, from this imputation: for though the comical parts are diverting, and the serious moving, yet they are of an unnatural mingle: for mirth and gravity destroy each other, and are no more to be allowed for decent than a gay widow laughing in a mourning habit.[6]

[1] Aristotle expresses no preference, and does not offer these judgments as his own. Cf. *Poetics*, ch. xxv: 'The poet may in fact reply—"But the objects are as they ought to be"; just as Sophocles said that he drew men as they ought to be; Euripides, as they are.'

[2] According to his own account (p. 200n., above), Acts I and III.

[3] In *All for Love* (1678).

[4] *De arte graphica*, ll. 240f.

[5] Cf. preface to *Albion*, p. 37n., above.

[6] This represents a recantation of a lifetime of theory and practice; cf. *Of Dramatic Poesy*, vol. I, pp. 56f., above.

I had almost forgotten one considerable resemblance. Du Fresnoy tells us 'that the figures of the groups must not be all on a side, that is, with their face and bodies all turned the same way; but must contrast each other by their several positions.'[1] Thus in a play, some characters must be raised, to oppose others; and to set them off the better, according to the old maxim, *contraria juxta se posita magis elucescunt*.[2] Thus, in *The Scornful Lady*, the usurer is set to confront the prodigal:[3] thus, in my *Tyrannic Love*, the atheist Maximin is opposed to the character of St Catherine.

I am now come, though with the omission of many likenesses, to the third part of painting, which is called the chromatic, or colouring. Expression, and all that belongs to words, is that in a poem which colouring is in a picture. The colours well chosen in their proper places, together with the lights and shadows which belong to them, lighten the design, and make it pleasing to the eye. The words, the expressions, the tropes and figures, the versification, and all the other elegancies of sound, as cadences, turns of words upon the thought, and many other things which are all parts of expression, perform exactly the same office both in dramatic and epic poetry. Our author calls colouring *lena sororis*;[4] in plain English, the bawd of her sister, the design or drawing: she clothes, she dresses her up, she paints her, she makes her appear more lovely than naturally she is, she procures for the design, and makes lovers for her. For the design of itself is only so many naked lines. Thus in poetry, the expression is that which charms the reader, and beautifies the design, which is only the outlines of the fable. 'Tis true, the design must of itself be good; if it be vicious, or (in one word) unpleasing, the cost of colouring is thrown away upon it. 'Tis an ugly woman in a rich habit set out with jewels; nothing can become her; but granting the design to be moderately good, 'tis like an excellent complexion with indifferent features; the white and red well mingled on the face make what was before but passable appear beautiful. *Operum colores*[5] is the very word which Horace uses to signify words and elegant expressions, of which he himself was so great a master in his Odes. Amongst the Ancients, Zeuxis was most famous for his colouring. Amongst

[1] *De arte graphica*, ll. 137f.
[2] Cf. *Of Dramatic Poesy*, vol. I, p. 58 and n., above.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 54n.
[4] *De arte graphica*, l. 261.
[5] *Ars poetica*, l. 86

the moderns, Titian and Correggio. Of the two ancient epic poets who have so far excelled all the moderns, the invention and design were the particular talents of Homer. Virgil must yield to him in both; for the design of the Latin was borrowed from the Grecian: but the *dictio Virgiliana*, the expression of Virgil, his colouring, was incomparably the better; and in that I have always endeavoured to copy him. Most of the pedants, I know, maintain the contrary, and will have Homer excel even in this part. But of all people, as they are the most ill-mannered, so they are the worst judges; even of words, which are their province, they seldom know more than the grammatical construction, unless they are born with a poetical genius, which is a rare portion amongst them. Yet some I know may stand excepted; and such I honour. Virgil is so exact in every word, that none can be changed but for a worse; nor any one removed from its place, but the harmony will be altered. He pretends sometimes to trip; but 'tis only to make you think him in danger of a fall, when he is most secure. Like a skilful dancer on the ropes (if you will pardon the meanness of the similitude), who slips willingly and makes a seeming stumble, that you may think him in great hazard of breaking his neck, while at the same time he is only giving you a proof of his dexterity. My late Lord Roscommon was often pleased with this reflection, and with the examples of it in this admirable author.

I have not leisure to run through the whole comparison of lights and shadows with tropes and figures; yet I cannot but take notice of metaphors, which like them have power to lessen or greaten anything. Strong and glowing colours are the just resemblances of bold metaphors, but both must be judiciously applied; for there is a difference betwixt daring and foolhardiness. Lucan and Statius often ventured them too far; our Virgil never. But the great defect of the *Pharsalia* and the *Thebais* was in the design: if that had been more perfect, we might have forgiven many of their bold strokes in the colouring, or at least excused them: yet some of them are such as Demosthenes or Cicero could not have defended. Virgil, if he could have seen the first verses of the *Sylvæ*, would have thought Statius mad, in his fustian description of the statue on the brazen horse. But that poet was always in a foam at his setting out, even before the motion of the race had warmed him. The soberness of Virgil,

whom he read it seems to little purpose, might have shown him the difference betwixt

arma virumque cano

and

magnanimum Æacidem, formidatamque tonanti
progeniem.[1]

But Virgil knew how to rise by degrees in his expressions: Statius was in his towering heights at the first stretch of his pinions. The description of his running horse, just starting in the Funeral Games for Archemorus, though the verses are wonderfully fine, are the true image of their author:

stare adeo nescit, pereunt vestigia mille
ante fugam; absentemque ferit gravis ungula campum,[2]

which would cost me an hour, if I had the leisure to translate them, there is so much of beauty in the original.

Virgil, as he better knew his colours, so he knew better how and where to place them. In as much haste as I am, I cannot forbear giving one example. 'Tis said of him that he read the second, fourth, and sixth books of his *Æneids* to Augustus Cæsar. In the sixth (which we are sure he read, because we know Octavia was present, who rewarded him so bountifully for the twenty verses which were made in honour of her deceased son, Marcellus[3]), in this sixth book, I say, the poet, speaking of Misenus the trumpeter, says:

quo non præstantior alter
ære ciere viros,

and broke off in the hemistich, or midst of the verse; but in the very reading, seized as it were with a divine fury, he made up the latter part of the hemistich with these following words:

Martemque accendere cantu.[4]

How warm, nay, how glowing a colouring is this! In the beginning of his verse, the word *æs*, or brass, was taken for a trumpet,

[1] The opening of Statius's unfinished epic *Achilleis*.

[2] *Thebais*, VI.400-1: 'It cannot stand still, a thousand paces are lost before the start, its heavy hoof beats upon the absent plain.' Pope adapted the lines in his *Windsor Forest* (1713).

[3] *Aeneid*, VI.855f.

[4] *Ibid.*, 164-5: 'surpassed by none in stirring men with the sound of the trumpet, and in kindling with his call the god of war.' Cf. p. 249, below.

because the instrument was made of that metal, which of itself was fine; but in the latter end, which was made *ex tempore*, you see three metaphors, *Martemque . . . accendere . . . cantu*. Good Heavens! how the plain sense is raised by the beauty of the words! But this was happiness, the former might be only judgment: this was the *curiosa felicitas* which Petronius attributes to Horace; 'tis the pencil thrown luckily full upon the horse's mouth, to express the foam which the painter with all his skill could not perform without it.[1] These hits of words a true poet often finds, as I may say, without seeking; but he knows their value when he finds them, and is infinitely pleased. A bad poet may sometimes light on them, but he discerns not a diamond from a Bristol-stone;[2] and would have been of the cock's mind in Æsop; a grain of barley would have pleased him better than the jewel.

The lights and shadows which belong to colouring put me in mind of that verse in Horace:

> hoc amat obscurum, vult hoc sub luce videri.[3]

some parts of a poem require to be amply written, and with all the force and elegance of words; others must be cast into shadows, that is, passed over in silence, or but faintly touched. This belongs wholly to the judgment of the poet and the painter. The most beautiful parts of the picture and the poem must be the most finished, the colours and words most chosen; many things in both, which are not deserving of this care, must be shifted off; content with vulgar expressions, and those very short, and left, as in a shadow, to the imagination of the reader.

We have the proverb *manum de tabula*[4] from the painters; which signifies, to know when to give over, and to lay by the pencil. Both Homer and Virgil practised this precept wonderfully well, but Virgil the better of the two. Homer knew that when Hector was slain, Troy was as good as already taken; therefore he concludes his action there: for what follows in the funerals of Patroclus, and the redemption of Hector's body, is not (properly speaking) a part of the main action. But Virgil

[1] *Satyricon*, 118; Pliny, xxxv. 16. [2] Cf. 'Grounds,' vol. I, p. 259n., above.
[3] *Ars poetica*, l. 363.
[4] Pliny, xxv.10: '(to take) one's hand from the picture.' Rapin, in his *Réflexions*, attributes the rule to Apelles, as Dryden does below.

concludes with the death of Turnus; for after that difficulty was removed Æneas might marry, and establish the Trojans when he pleased. This rule I had before my eyes in the conclusion of the *Spanish Friar*, when the discovery was made that the king was living, which was the knot of the play untied; the rest is shut up in the compass of some few lines, because nothing then hindered the happiness of Torismond and Leonora. The faults of that drama are in the kind of it, which is tragi-comedy. But it was given to the people: and I never writ anything for myself but *Anthony and Cleopatra*.[1]

This remark, I must acknowledge, is not so proper for the colouring as the design; but it will hold for both. As the words, etc., are evidently shown to be the clothing of the thought, in the same sense as colours are the clothing of the design, so the painter and the poet ought to judge exactly when the colouring and expressions are perfect, and then to think their work is truly finished. Apelles said of Protogenes that he knew not when to give over. A work may be over-wrought as well as under-wrought: too much labour often takes away the spirit by adding to the polishing, so that there remains nothing but a dull correctness, a piece without any considerable faults, but with few beauties; for when the spirits are drawn off, there is nothing but a *caput mortuum*. Statius never thought an expression could be bold enough; and if a bolder could be found, he rejected the first. Virgil had judgment enough to know daring was necessary; but he knew the difference betwixt a glowing colour and a glaring; as when he compared the shocking of the fleets at Actium to the jostling of islands rent from their foundations, and meeting in the ocean. He knew the comparison was forced beyond nature, and raised too high; he therefore softens the metaphor with a *credas*: you would almost believe that mountains or islands rushed against each other:

> credas innare revulsas
> Cycladas, aut montis concurrere montibus altos.[2]

But here I must break off without finishing the discourse.

Cynthius aurem vellit, et admonuit,[3] etc. The things which are behind are too nice a consideration for an essay begun and ended

[1] I.e. *All for Love* (1678).
[2] *Aeneid*, VIII.691-2; *1695* ends the quotation with 'æquos.'
[3] Virgil, *Eclogues*, VI.3-4: 'the Cynthian plucked my ear and warned me.'

in twelve mornings, and perhaps the judges of painting and poetry, when I tell them how short a time it cost me, may make me the same answer which my late Lord Rochester made to one who, to commend a tragedy, said it was written in three weeks: 'How the devil could he be so long about it?' For that poem was infamously bad; and I doubt this Parallel is little better; and then the shortness of the time is so far from being a commendation, that it is scarcely an excuse. But if I have really drawn a portrait to the knees, or an half-length, with a tolerable likeness, then I may plead, with some justice for myself, that the rest is left to the imagination. Let some better artist provide himself of a deeper canvas, and taking these hints which I have given, set the figure on its legs, and finish it in the invention, design, and colouring.

THE LIFE OF LUCIAN

Prefixed to *The Works of Lucian, Translated from the Greek by Several Eminent Hands* (1711)

LUCIAN'S WIT—THE DIALOGUE—THE ART OF TRANSLATION

Text: 8°, 1711.

Dryden probably wrote the Life in about 1696, while engaged on his translation of Virgil, as the rather gratuitous allusion to the *Aeneid* suggests. The Lucian translation, like the 1683 Plutarch, was the work of various hands, not including Dryden's: Charles Blount, Walter Moyle, and Sir Henry Sheers are named, and it may have been Sheers who secured the commission for Dryden as a consequence of his introduction to Sheers's Polybius (pp. 65-70, above). Dryden fails to name the scandalous Tom Brown (1663-1704), perhaps the most important single contributor to the Lucian—probably because Brown had ridiculed Dryden in print on several occasions. The work, condemned by Fielding (*Amelia*, VIII.v) as a 'wretched' version, was for some reason not published till eleven years after Dryden's death, and the Life itself, in spite of interesting digressions, is ill-organized enough to suggest that it may have been left unrevised by Dryden. Malone remarks that the punctuation and paragraphing are so eccentric that 'it must have been printed from a copy very carelessly written.' Cf. Hardin Craig, 'Dryden's Lucian,' *Classical Philology*, xvi (1921).

THE writing a life is at all times, and in all circumstances, the most difficult task of an historian; and notwithstanding the numerous tribe of biographers, we can scarce find one except Plutarch who deserves our perusal, or can invite a second view. But if the difficulty be so great where the materials are plentiful, what must it be when the person and the incidents extraordinary, what must it be when the person that affords the subject denies matter enough for a page? The learned seldom abound with action, and it is action only that furnishes the historian with things agreeable and instructive. 'Tis true that Diogenes Laertius, and our learned countryman

Mr Stanley,[1] have both written the lives of the philosophers; but we are more obliged to the various principles of their several sects than to any thing remarkable that they did for our entertainment. But Lucian, as pleasing and useful as he was in his writings, in the opinion of the most candid judges, has left so little of his own affairs on record that there is scarce sufficient to fill a page from his birth to his death.

[There follows a biography of the Greek prose-writer Lucian (*c.* A.D. 120-180), based mainly on the French translation by Perrot d'Ablancour (1634) and on the English version by Jasper Mayne (1663). (The first English Lucian, by Francis Hickes (1634) seems to have been unknown to Dryden.) An account of Lucian's religious belief follows, and a condemnation of the Spanish Inquisition, on the grounds that Christianity is 'not capable of a demonstration,' but makes its way by God's grace alone.]

These reasons, therefore, as they make nothing against his being an atheist, so they prove nothing of his believing one God; but only leave him as they found him, and leave us in as great an obscurity concerning his religion as before. I may be as much mistaken in my opinion as these great men have been before me; and this is very probable, because I know less of him than they; yet I have read him over more than once, and therefore will presume to say that I think him either one of the elective[2] school, or else a sceptic: I mean that he either formed a body of philosophy for his own use out of the opinions and dogmas of several heathen philosophers disagreeing amongst themselves; or that he doubted of every thing, weighed all opinions, and adhered to none of them; only used them as they served his occasion for the present dialogue; and perhaps rejected them in the next. And indeed, this last opinion is the more probable of the two if we consider the genius of the man, whose image we may clearly see in the glass which he holds before us of his writings, which reflects him to our sight.

[Dryden then concludes that Lucian was a sceptic in philosophy, condemns his sexual morality, and offers a summary of the critical views of his style made by his translators and editors.]

If wit consists in the propriety of thoughts and words (which

[1] Thomas Stanley (1625-78), *The History of Philosophy* (1655).
[2] Malone suggests the word is a misprint for *eclectic*; but Henry More (1614-87), in the preface to his *Exposition of the Prophecies of Daniel* (1681), calls himself 'a philosopher of the elective sect'; rare as the usage is, no emendation is called for.

I imagined I had first found out; but since am pleasingly convinced that Aristotle has made the same definition in other terms[1]), then Lucian's thoughts and words are always proper to his characters and to his subject. If the pleasure arising from comedy and satire be either laughter, or some nobler sort of delight which is above it, no man is so great a master of irony as our author. That figure is not only a keen, but a shining weapon in his hand; it glitters in the eyes of those it kills; his own gods, his greatest enemies, are not butchered by him but fairly slain: they must acknowledge the hero in the stroke, and take the comfort which Virgil gives to a dying captain: *Æneæ magni dextra cadis.*[2]

I do not know whom Lucian imitated, unless it might be Aristophanes (for you never find him mentioning any Roman wit, so much the Grecians thought themselves superior to their conquerors). But he who has best imitated him in Latin is Erasmus, and in French Fontenelle, in his *Dialogues of the Dead*; which I never read but with a new pleasure.

Any one may see that our author's chief design was to disnest[3] Heaven of so many immoral and debauched deities; his next, to expose the mock philosophers; and his last, to give us examples of a good life in the persons of the true. The rest of his discourses are on mixed subjects, less for profit than delight; and some of them too libertine.

The way which Lucian chose of delivering these profitable and pleasing truths was that of dialogue: a choice worthy of the author, happily followed, as I said above, by Erasmus and Fontenelle particularly; to whom I may justly add a triumvir of our own: the reverend, ingenious and learned Dr Echard[4] who,

[1] A definition of which Dryden was extremely fond—cf. vol. I, p. 207, above. Aristotle's 'other terms' are best to be studied in *Rhetoric*, III,2 (1404b): 'Style must be appropriate, avoiding both meanness and undue elevation. . . . Even in poetry, it is not quite appropriate that fine language be used for a slave or youth, or about very trivial subjects; the style must sometimes be toned down, though at other times heightened.' Cf. *Poetics*, ch. xxii, for further discussion of the principle of literary decorum.

[2] *Aeneid*, x.830: ''Twas by the great Aeneas' hand I fell' (Dryden's translation, x.1180). Cf. p. 137 and n., above.

[3] I.e. to free, as from a nest—an almost unique usage, of which *OED* records only one other instance, in 1596.

[4] John Eachard, Master of St Catherine Hall, Cambridge, who attacked Hobbes in two witty dialogues, *Mr Hobbes's State of Nature Considered in a Dialogue between Philautus and Timothy* (1671) and the *Second Dialogue* (1673).

by using the same method, and the same ingredients of raillery and reason, has more baffled the Philosopher of Malmesbury than those who assaulted him with blunt, heavy arguments drawn from orthodox divinity. For Hobbes foresaw where those strokes would fall, and leapt aside before they could descend; but he could not avoid those nimble passes which were made on him by a wit more active than his own, and which were within his body before he could provide for his defence.

I will not here take notice of the several kinds of dialogue and the whole art of it, which would ask an entire volume to perform. This has been a work long wanted and much desired, of which the Ancients have not sufficiently informed us; and I question whether any man now living can treat it accurately. Lucian, it seems, was very sensible of the difficult task which he undertook in writing dialogues, as appears in his discourse against one who had called him Prometheus: he owns himself, in this particular, to be like him to whom he was resembled, to be the inventor of a new work, attempted in a new manner, the model of which he had from none before him; but adds withal that if he could not give it the graces which belong to so happy an invention, he deserves to be torn by twelve vultures, instead of one which preys upon the heart of that first man-potter. For, to quit the beaten road of the Ancients, and take a path of his own choosing, he acknowledges to be a bold and ridiculous attempt if it succeed not. The mirth of dialogue and comedy in my work, says he, is not enough to make it pleasing, because the union of two contraries may as well produce a monster as a miracle; as a centaur results from the joint natures of a horse and man. 'Tis not but that from two excellent beings, a third may arise of perfect beauty; but 'tis what I dare not promise to myself: for dialogue being a solemn entertainment of grave discourse, and comedy the wit and fooling of a theatre, I fear that through the corruption of two good things I have made one bad. But whatever the child be, 'tis my own at least; I beg not with another's brat upon my back.[1]

[Dryden at this point cuts short his summary of Lucian's justification of dialogue and embarks upon a series of conventional compli-

[1] This vigorous paraphrase and summary of Lucian's 'A Literary Prometheus,' though admittedly derivative, suggests that Dryden's interest in the dialogue as a literary form was still lively thirty years after his single attempt in this manner, the essay *Of Dramatic Poesy* (vol. I, pp. 18-92, above).

ments to the translators of the 1711 version, interrupted by a passionate digression upon the habits of critics.]

There are some other persons concerned in this work whose names deserve a place among the foremost, but that they have not thought fit to be known, either out of a bashful diffidence of their own performance, or out of apprehension of the censure of an ill-natured and ill-judging age. For criticism is now become mere hangman's work, and meddles only with the faults of authors; nay, the critic is disgusted less with their absurdities than excellence, and you can't displease him more than in leaving him little room for his malice in your correctness and perfection; tho' that indeed is what he never allows any man, for like the bed of Procrustes, they stretch or cut off an author to its length. These spoilers of Parnassus are a just excuse for concealing the name, since most of their malice is levelled more at the person than the thing; and as a sure mark of their judgment, they will extol to the skies the anonymous work of a person they will not allow to write common sense.

[Dryden continues his praise of the present version, and condemns the very derivative English version by Ferrand Spence (1684-5) as 'scandalous' in its inaccuracies. He commends the new principle of translation by several hands inaugurated a dozen years before in the 1683 Plutarch (pp. 1f., above): 'It seems a task too hard for any one man to undertake, the burden would indeed be insupportable, unless we did what the French have done in some of their translations, allow twenty years to perfect the work, and bestow all the brightest intervals, the most sprightly hours, to polish and finish the work.']

This has brought me to say a word or two about translation in general: in which no nation might more excel than the English,[1] tho' as matters are now managed, we come so far short of the French. There may, indeed, be a reason assigned, which bears a very great probability; and that is that here the booksellers are the undertakers of works of this nature, and they are persons more devoted to their own gain than the public honour. They are very parsimonious in rewarding the wretched scribblers

[1] Dryden makes his appeal at the threshold of the second great age of English translation, which his own Virgil of 1697 inaugurated. It was followed by Pope's Homer (1715-26), Rowe's Lucan (1718), Gilbert West's Pindar (1749), Elizabeth Carter's Epictetus (1758), Thomas Twining's version of Aristotle's *Poetics* (1789), and other translations that owe their vigour to Dryden's precept and example.

they employ; and care not how the business is done, so that it be but done. They live by selling titles, not books, and if that carry off one impression, they have their ends, and value not the curses they and their authors meet with from the bubbled chapmen.[1] While translations are thus at the disposal of the booksellers, and have no better judges or rewarders of the performance, it is impossible that we should make any progress in an art so very useful to an enquiring people, and for the improvement and spreading of knowledge, which is none of the worst preservatives against slavery.

It must be confessed that when the bookseller has interest with gentlemen of genius and quality above the mercenary prospects of little writers, as in that of Plutarch's *Lives*,[2] and this of Lucian, the reader may satisfy himself that he shall have the author's spirit and soul in the traduction. These gentlemen know very well that they are not to creep after the words of their author in so servile a manner as some have done. For that must infallibly throw them on a necessity of introducing a new mode of diction and phraseology with which we are not at all acquainted, and would incur that censure which my Lord Dorset made formerly on those of Mr Spence, viz. 'that he was so cunning a translator that a man must consult the original to understand the version.' For every language has a propriety and idiom peculiar to itself, which cannot be conveyed to another without perpetual absurdities.

The qualification of a translator worth reading must be a mastery of the language he translates out of, and that he translates into; but if a deficience be to be allowed in either, it is in the original, since if he be but master enough of the tongue of his author as to be master of his sense, it is possible for him to express that sense with eloquence in his own, if he have a thorough command of that. But without the latter he can never arrive at the useful and the delightful, without which reading is a penance and fatigue.

'Tis true that there will be a great many beauties which in every tongue depend on the diction, that will be left in the version of a man not skilled in the original language of the author. But then, on the other side: first, it is impossible to render all those little ornaments of speech in any two languages;

[1] I.e. cheated salesmen in books. [2] See pp. 1f., above.

and if he have a mastery in the sense and spirit of his author, and in his own language have a style and happiness of expression, he will easily supply all that is lost by that defect.

A translator that would write with any force or spirit of an original must never dwell on the words of his author. He ought to possess himself entirely and perfectly comprehend the genius and sense of his author, the nature of the subject, and the terms of the art or subject treated of. And then he will express himself as justly, and with as much life, as if he wrote an original: whereas he who copies word for word loses all the spirit in the tedious transfusion.

I would not be understood that he should be at liberty to give such a turn as Mr Spence has in some of his, where for the fine raillery and Attic salt of Lucian, we find the gross expressions of Billingsgate, or Moorfields and Bartholomew Fair. For I write not to such translators, but to men capacious of the soul and genius of their authors, without which all their labour will be of no use but to disgrace themselves, and injure the author that falls into their slaughter-house.

I believe I need give no other rules to the reader than the following version, where example will be stronger than precept, to which I now refer them. In which a man justly qualified for a translator will discover many rules extremely useful to that end. But [to] a man who wants these natural qualifications which are necessary for such an undertaking, all particular precepts are of no other use than to make him a more remarkable coxcomb.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HUGH, LORD CLIFFORD, BARON OF CHUDLEIGH

Prefixed to the *Pastorals* in *The Works of Virgil, Translated into English Verse* (1697)

PASTORALISM—VIRGIL'S *ECLOGUES*, SPENSER'S *SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR*

Text: folio, 1697.

Dryden accepted Tonson's commission 'to translate all Virgil' (p. 175, above) in 1693, and signed a contract with him in June 1694. The ageing poet fulfilled the task in three years, though he was conscious of haste and openly regretted (pp. 235-6, below) that he could not spend another four years in correction. *The Works of Virgil* was published by subscription in July or August 1697, in an imposing but carelessly printed folio.

Dryden's dedication to his version of the *Eclogues*, below, is followed by an anonymous preface by Knightley Chetwood in defence of pastoralism. But Dryden cannot resist the temptation to comment on Chetwood's preface and to justify the Theocritean tradition, though in patronizing terms. His praise of pastoralism, one feels, could easily turn to contempt, as Johnson's did half a century later, in the years between *Rambler*, no. 37 and the Life of Milton.

The subject of the Dedication, the younger Clifford (1663-1730), second Baron Chudleigh, was the son of Thomas Clifford, a former member of Charles II's Cabal. The second Dedication, addressed to Philip, Earl of Chesterfield, which precedes the *Georgics*, is of almost no literary interest. For the Dedication to the *Aeneis*, cf. pp. 223f. below.

MY LORD,

I HAVE found it not more difficult to translate Virgil than to find such patrons as I desire for my translation. For though England is not wanting in a learned nobility, yet such are my unhappy circumstances that they have confined me to a narrow

choice.[1] To the greater part, I have not the honour to be known; and to some of them I cannot shew at present, by any public act, that grateful respect which I shall ever bear them in my heart. Yet I have no reason to complain of fortune, since in the midst of that abundance I could not possibly have chosen better than the worthy son of a so illustrious a father.[2] He was the patron of my manhood when I flourished in the opinion of the world; though with small advantage to my fortune, till he awakened the remembrance of my royal master. He was that Pollio, or that Varus,[3] who introduced me to Augustus. And tho' he soon dismissed himself from State affairs, yet in the short time of his administration he shone so powerfully upon me that, like the heat of a Russian summer, he ripened the fruits of poetry in a cold climate; and gave me wherewithal to subsist at least in the long winter which succeeded. What I now offer to your Lordship is the wretched remainder of a sickly age, worn out with study and oppressed by fortune: without other support than the constancy and patience of a Christian. You, my Lord, are yet in the flower of your youth, and may live to enjoy the benefits of the peace which is promised Europe. I can only hear of that blessing: for years and, above all things, want of health, have shut me out from sharing in the happiness. The poets who condemn their Tantalus to Hell[4] had added to his torments, if they had placed him in Elysium, which is the proper emblem of my condition. The fruit and the water may reach my lips, but cannot enter; and, if they could, yet I want a palate as well as a digestion.

But it is some kind of pleasure to me to please those whom I respect. And I am not altogether out of hope that these *Pastorals* of Virgil may give your Lordship some delight, though made English by one who scarce remembers that passion which inspired my author when he wrote them. These were his first

[1] The 1697 Virgil was published by public subscription. Cf. letter to Walsh (December 1693), p. 176, above.

[2] Thomas, Lord Clifford (1630-73), who had been a patron of Dryden, was a Catholic nobleman who gave up his position as Lord Treasurer to Charles II because of the Test Act of 1673. Dryden had dedicated to him his tragedy *Amboyna* (1673).

[3] C. Asinius Pollio, a Consul in the reign of Augustus, was patron to both Virgil and Horace. Quintilius Varus was a Roman proconsul and general. Virgil addresses his fourth eclogue or pastoral to Pollio, and his sixth to Varus.

[4] E.g. Horace, *Satires*, I.i.68.

essay in poetry (if the 'Ceiris' was not his):[1] and it was more excusable in him to describe love when he was young than for me to translate him when I am old. He died at the age of fifty-two, and I began this work in my great climacteric.[2] But having perhaps a better constitution than my author, I have wronged him less, considering my circumstances, than those who have attempted him before, either in our own, or any modern language. And though this version is not void of errors, yet it comforts me that the faults of others are not worth finding. Mine are neither gross nor frequent, in those *Eclogues* where my master has raised himself above that humble style in which pastoral delights, and which, I must confess, is proper to the education and converse of shepherds: for he found the strength of his genius betimes, and was even in his youth preluding to his *Georgics* and his *Aeneis*. He could not forbear to try his wings, though his pinions were not hardened to maintain a long, laborious flight. Yet sometimes they bore him to a pitch as lofty as ever he was able to reach afterwards. But when he was admonished by his subject to descend, he came down gently circling in the air, and singing to the ground; like a lark, melodious in her mounting, and continuing her song till she alights: still preparing for a higher flight at her next sally, and tuning her voice to better music. The fourth, the sixth, and the eighth pastorals are clear evidences of this truth. In the three first, he contains himself within his bounds; but addressing to Pollio, his great patron, and himself no vulgar poet, he could not longer restrain the freedom of his spirit, but began to assert his native character, which is sublimity: putting himself under the conduct of the same Cumæan Sybil whom afterwards he gave for a guide to his Æneas.[3] 'Tis true he was sensible of his own boldness; and we know it by the *paulo majora*[4] which begins his fourth eclogue. He remembered, like young Manlius,[5] that he

[1] 'Ciris'; its authenticity is still a matter for debate. Virgil (70-19 B.C.) probably wrote the *Eclogues* between 42 and 37 B.C., between the ages of 28 and 33, and followed them with the *Georgics* (*c.* 37-29 B.C.) and the *Aeneid* (*c.* 29-19 B.C.).

[2] I.e. at the age of 63, being a multiple of the figure seven. Dryden attained this age in August 1694, shortly after starting work on the Virgil.

[3] *Aeneid*, III.441f.

[4] 'somewhat loftier.'

[5] The son of Manlius Torquatus, the dictator, was killed by his father because he had challenged and defeated one of the enemy without his father's permission.

was forbidden to engage; but what avails an express command to a youthful courage which presages victory in the attempt? Encouraged with success, he proceeds farther in the sixth, and invades the province of philosophy. And notwithstanding that Phoebus had forewarned him of singing wars, as he there confesses,[1] yet he presumed that the search of nature was as free to him as to Lucretius, who at his age explained it according to the principles of Epicurus. In his eighth eclogue he has innovated nothing; the former part of it being the complaint and despair of a forsaken lover: the latter, a charm of an enchantress to renew a lost affection. But the complaint perhaps contains some topics which are above the condition of his persons; and our author seems to have made his herdsmen somewhat too learned for their profession. The charms are also of the same nature, but both were copied from Theocritus, and had received the applause of former ages in their original. There is a kind of rusticity in all those pompous verses; somewhat of a holiday shepherd strutting in his country buskins. The like may be observed, both in the 'Pollio' and the 'Silenus,'[2] where the similitudes are drawn from the woods and meadows. They seem to me to represent our poet betwixt a farmer and a courtier when he left Mantua for Rome, and dressed himself in his best habit to appear before his patron: somewhat too finely for the place from whence he came, and yet retaining part of its simplicity. In the ninth pastoral he collects some beautiful passages which were scattered in Theocritus, which he could not insert into any of his former eclogues, and yet was unwilling they should be lost. In all the rest he is equal to his Sicilian master, and observes like him a just decorum, both of the subject and the persons. As particularly in the third pastoral, where one of his shepherds describes a bowl, or mazer,[3] curiously carved:

> in medio duo signa: Conon, et quis fuit alter,
> descripsit radio totum qui gentibus orbem.[4]

[1] Eclogue VI.3-4. [2] The fourth and sixth eclogues.
[3] I.e. a wooden bowl mounted in silver. Cf. Eclogue III.36f.
[4] *Ibid.*, 40-1:

> Conon, and what's his name who made the sphere,
> And shew'd the seasons of the sliding year
> (Dryden, ll. 61-2).

Of the two astronomers, the other is probably Eudoxus.

He remembers only the name of Conon, and forgets the other on set purpose: whether he means Anaximander or Eudoxus I dispute not, but he was certainly forgotten to shew his country swain was no great scholar.

After all, I must confess that the boorish dialect of Theocritus has a secret charm in it which the Roman language cannot imitate, though Virgil has drawn it down as low as possibly he could;[1] as in the *cujum pecus*,[2] and some other words, for which he was so unjustly blamed by the bad critics of his age, who could not see the beauties of that *merum rus*[3] which the poet described in those expressions. But Theocritus may justly be preferred as the original without injury to Virgil, who modestly contents himself with the second place, and glories only in being the first who transplanted pastoral into his own country, and brought it there to bear as happily as the cherry-trees which Lucullus brought from Pontus.[4]

Our own nation has produced a third poet in this kind, not inferior to the two former. For the *Shepherd's Calendar* of Spenser is not be matched in any modern language. Not even by Tasso's *Aminta*, which infinitely transcends Guarini's *Pastor Fido* as having more of nature in it, and being almost wholly clear from the wretched affectation of learning. I will say nothing of the *Piscatory Eclogues*,[5] because no modern Latin can bear criticism. 'Tis no wonder that rolling down through so many barbarous ages, from the spring of Virgil, it bears along with it the filth and ordures of the Goths and Vandals. Neither will I mention Monsieur Fontenelle,[6] the living glory of the French. 'Tis enough for him to have excelled his master Lucian, without attempting to compare our miserable age with that of Virgil or Theocritus. Let me only add, for his reputation,

[1] Cf. the praise of Theocritus' 'simplicity' in the preface to *Sylvae*, p. 30, above.

[2] Eclogue III.1: 'whose flock?'

[3] I.e. the mere countryside.

[4] According to Pliny (xv.30), Lucullus introduced the cherry into Italy from the East after his defeat of Mithridates in 63 B.C.

[5] Jacopo Sannazzaro (*c.* 1457-1530), *Piscatoriae* (1526). Johnson condemns them in *Rambler*, no. 36.

[6] Fontenelle had attacked the pastoral tradition of Theocritus and Virgil in his *Discours sur l'églogue*, to which Knightley Chetwood replied in the 1697 Virgil in his anonymous 'Preface to the *Pastorals*, with a Short Defence of Virgil against some of the Reflections of Monsieur Fontenelle'.

si Pergama dextra
defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent.[1]

But Spenser, being master of our northern dialect, and skilled in Chaucer's English, has so exactly imitated the Doric of Theocritus that his love is a perfect image of that passion which God infused into both sexes before it was corrupted with the knowledge of arts, and the ceremonies of what we call good manners.

My Lord, I know to whom I dedicate: and could not have been induced by any motive to put this part of Virgil, or any other, into unlearned hands. You have read him with pleasure and, I dare say, with admiration, in the Latin, of which you are a master. You have added to your natural endowments, which without flattery are eminent, the superstructures of study, and the knowledge of good authors. Courage, probity, and humanity are inherent in you. These virtues have ever been habitual to the ancient house of Cumberland, from whence you are descended, and of which our chronicles make so honourable mention in the long wars betwixt the rival families of York and Lancaster. Your forefathers have asserted the party which they chose till death, and died for its defence in the fields of battle. You have, besides, the fresh remembrance of your noble father, from whom you never can degenerate.

nec imbellem, feroces
progenerant aquilae columbam.[2]

It being almost morally impossible for you to be other than you are by kind, I need neither praise nor incite your virtue. You are acquainted with the Roman history, and know without my information that patronage and clientship always descended from the fathers to the sons; and that the same plebeian houses had recourse to the same patrician line which had formerly protected them, and followed their principles and fortunes to the last. So that I am your Lordship's by descent, and part of your inheritance. And the natural inclination which I have to serve you adds

[1] *Aeneid*, II.291-2:

If by a mortal hand my father's throne
Could be defended, 'twas by mine alone.
(Dryden, II.387-8).

[2] Horace, *Odes*, IV.iv.31-2: 'nor do fierce eagles beget the timorous dove.'

to your paternal right, for I was wholly yours from the first moment when I had the happiness and honour of being known to you. Be pleased, therefore, to accept the rudiments of Virgil's poetry: coarsely translated, I confess, but which yet retains some beauties of the author which neither the barbarity of our language nor my unskilfulness could so much sully, but that they appear sometimes in the dim mirror which I hold before you. The subject is not unsuitable to your youth, which allows you yet to love, and is proper to your present scene of life. Rural recreations abroad, and books at home, are the innocent pleasures of a man who is early wise, and gives fortune no more hold of him than of necessity he must. 'Tis good, on some occasions, to think beforehand as little as we can; to enjoy as much of the present as will not endanger our futurity; and to provide ourselves of the virtuoso's saddle, which will be sure to amble when the world is upon the hardest trot. What I humbly offer to your Lordship is of this nature. I wish it pleasant, and am sure 'tis innocent. May you ever continue your esteem for Virgil; and not lessen it for the faults of his translator, who is, with all manner of respect, and sense of gratitude,

My Lord,
Your Lordship's most humble
and most obedient servant,
JOHN DRYDEN.

TO THE MOST HONOURABLE JOHN, LORD MARQUESS OF NORMANBY, EARL OF MULGRAVE, etc.
and Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter

Prefixed to the *Aeneis* in *The Works of Virgil, Translated into English Verse* (1697)

EPIC V. TRAGEDY—CLASSICAL MODELS—TRANSLATING VIRGIL—PROSODY—LATINISMS

Text: folio, 1697.

Dryden's vast Dedication to the *Aeneis*, evidently written towards the end of his three-year labour of translation, is addressed to John Sheffield (1648-1721), third Earl of Mulgrave and, since 1694, Marquess of Normanby—the 'sharp-judging Adriel' of *Absalom and Achitophel* (I.877), and the author of *An Essay upon Satire* (1679?) and *An Essay on Poetry* (1682), in the first of which Dryden was thought to have had a hand. Sheffield had Catholic sympathies, and was among the few who supported James II in 1688; he became a leader of the Tory opposition to William III. As early as *Aureng-Zebe* (1676), at least, he had taken an interest in Dryden's career, and had encouraged him in his unrealized design of writing an epic, as well as advocating the poet's cause to Charles II. That Dryden, after dedicating *Aureng-Zebe* to Sheffield, should now offer him the *Aeneis*, is some measure of his own purpose in translating Virgil. It not only secured him an income at a time when he had ceased to hope for Court favours: it was also a last, half-guilty concession to the unfulfilled dream of an English epic which, as he approached the age of seventy, he must have known he would never write.

Much of the Dedication is vigorous and able. But it is ill designed—Dryden calls the style 'loose, epistolary' (p. 232, below)—and in part derivative, a long central section being explicitly adapted from Segrais's preface to his own *Enéide* (1668), and from other commentators on Virgil. The section, amounting to about half the essay, is omitted here, and its substance summarized.

A HEROIC poem, truly such, is undoubtedly the greatest work which the soul of man is capable to perform. The design of it

is to form the mind to heroic virtue by example; 'tis conveyed in verse, that it may delight while it instructs. The action of it is always one, entire, and great.[1] The least and most trivial episodes, or under-actions, which are interwoven in it are parts either necessary or convenient to carry on the main design: either so necessary that without them the poem must be imperfect, or so convenient that no others can be imagined more suitable to the place in which they are. There is nothing to be left void in a firm building; even the cavities ought not to be filled with rubbish which is of a perishable kind, destructive to the strength, but with brick or stone though of less pieces, yet of the same nature, and fitted to the crannies. Even the least portions of them must be of the epic kind: all things must be grave, majestical, and sublime; nothing of a foreign nature, like the trifling novels which Ariosto[2] and others have inserted in their poems; by which the reader is misled into another sort of pleasure, opposite to that which is designed in an epic poem. One raises the soul, and hardens it to virtue; the other softens it again, and unbends it into vice. One conduces to the poet's aim, the completing of his work, which he is driving on, labouring and hastening in every line; the other slackens his pace, diverts him from his way, and locks him up like a knight-errant in an enchanted castle, when he should be pursuing his first adventure. Statius, as Bossu[3] has well observed, was ambitious of trying his strength with his master Virgil, as Virgil had before tried his with Homer. The Grecian gave the two Romans an example, in the games which were celebrated at the funerals of Patroclus. Virgil imitated the invention of Homer, but changed the sports. But both the Greek and Latin poet took their occasions from the subject; though, to confess the truth, they were both ornamental or, at best, convenient parts of it, rather than of necessity arising from it. Statius, who through his whole poem is noted for want of conduct and judgment, instead of staying, as he might have done, for the death of Capaneus, Hippomedon, Tydeus, or some other of his seven champions (who are heroes all alike), or more

[1] From Aristotle's definition of tragedy (*Poetics*, ch. vi). Cf. p. 96 and n., above.

[2] 'Aristotle,' *1697*—a blunder first recorded by Malone, and one of the most absurd in the folio. In December 1697 Dryden complained in a letter to Tonson that 'the printer is a beast, and understands nothing I can say to him of correcting the press.'

[3] *Traité du poeme épique* (1675), ii.8.

properly for the tragical end of the two brothers, whose exequies the next successor had leisure to perform when the siege was raised, and in the interval betwixt the poet's first action and his second—went out of his way, as it were on prepense malice, to commit a fault. For he took his opportunity to kill a royal infant[1] by the means of a serpent (that author of all evil), to make way for those funeral honours which he intended for him. Now, if this innocent had been of any relation to his *Thebais*, if he had either farthered or hindered the taking of the town, the poet might have found some sorry excuse at least for detaining the reader from the promised siege. I can think of nothing to plead for him but what I verily believe he thought himself, which was that as the funerals of Anchises were solemnized in Sicily, so those of Archemorus should be celebrated in Candy.[2] For the last was an island, and a better than the first, because Jove was born there. On these terms, this Capaneus[3] of a poet engaged his two immortal predecessors; and his success was answerable to his enterprise.

If this economy must be observed in the minutest parts of an epic poem which, to a common reader, seem to be detached from the body and almost independent of it; what soul, tho' sent into the world with great advantages of nature, cultivated with the liberal arts and sciences, conversant with histories of the dead, and enriched with observations on the living, can be sufficient to inform the whole body of so great a work? I touch

[1] Archemorus, killed at Nemea by a serpent (*Thebais*, V.534f.). The Nemean games were founded in memory of the child.

[2] This sentence, and the following one, were omitted in the second edition of 1698, presumably because Dryden had the error pointed out to him. Anchises, the father of Aeneas, certainly died at Dupanum in Sicily (*Aeneid*, III.707), but Archemorus did not die in Crete (Candy). There was a well-established legend, which Dryden had recently translated in *Georgics*, IV.149-52, that Crete was the birthplace of Jupiter.

[3] One of the Seven against Thebes, and the type of foolhardiness. He climbed over the walls boasting that not even Jupiter would stop him, and was killed by a thunderbolt. The 'two immortal predecessors' are of course Homer and Virgil. But Dryden's contempt for Statius is somewhat qualified by his note to *Aeneid*, V (pp. 630-1), where he praises the horse-race in the *Thebais*, though he sets Virgil above Statius and even Homer in the description of sports. Virgil, he suggests, omitted a horse-race from the funeral games of Anchises 'because he shews Ascanius afterwards on horseback, with his troops of boys, and would not wear that subject threadbare; which Statius in the next age described so happily. Virgil seems to me to have excelled Homer in all those sports, and to have laboured them the more in honour of Octavius his patron. . . .'

here but transiently, without any strict method, on some few of those many rules of imitating nature which Aristotle drew from Homer's *Iliads* and *Odysseys*, and which he fitted to the drama; furnishing himself also with observations from the practice of the theatre, when it flourished under Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles. For the original of the stage was from the epic poem. Narration, doubtless, preceded acting, and gave laws to it: what at first was told artfully was, in process of time, represented gracefully to the sight and hearing. Those episodes of Homer which were proper for the stage, the poets amplified each into an action; out of his limbs they formed their bodies; what he had contracted, they enlarged; out of one Hercules were made infinite of pigmies, yet all endued with human souls; for from him, their great creator, they have each of them the *divinæ particulam auræ*.[1] They flowed from him at first, and are at least resolved into him. Nor were they only animated by him, but their measure and symmetry was owing to him. His one, entire, and great action was copied by them according to the proportions of the drama. If he finished his orb within the year, it suffered to teach them that their action being less, and being also less diversified with incidents, their orb, of consequence, must be circumscribed in a less compass, which they reduced within the limits either of a natural or an artificial day; so that, as he taught them to amplify what he had shortened, by the same rule, applied the contrary way, he taught them to shorten what he had amplified. Tragedy is the miniature of human life; an epic poem is the draught at length. Here, my Lord, I must contract also; for, before I was aware, I was almost running into a long digression to prove that there is no such absolute necessity that the time of a stage action should so strictly be confined to twenty-four hours as never to exceed them, for which Aristotle contends,[2] and the Grecian stage has practised. Some longer space on some occasions, I think may be allowed, especially for the English theatre, which requires more variety of incidents than the French. Corneille himself,[3] after long practice, was inclined to think that the time allotted by the Ancients was too short to raise and finish a great action: and

[1] Horace, *Satires*, II.ii.79: 'particle of the divine breath.'
[2] For the unity of time, see vol. I, p. 28, above.
[3] The third 'Discours' of 1660, where he argues that the limit of twenty-four hours might be stretched to thirty.

better a mechanic rule were stretched or broken than a great beauty were omitted. To raise, and afterwards to calm the passions, to purge the soul from pride, by the examples of human miseries, which befall the greatest; in few words, to expel arrogance, and introduce compassion, are the great effects of tragedy.[1] Great, I must confess, if they were altogether as true as they are pompous. But are habits to be introduced at three hours' warning? Are radical diseases so suddenly removed? A mountebank may promise such a cure, but a skilful physician will not undertake it. An epic poem is not in so much haste: it works leisurely; the changes which it makes are slow; but the cure is likely to be more perfect. The effects of tragedy, as I said, are too violent to be lasting. If it be answered that, for this reason, tragedies are often to be seen, and the dose to be repeated, this is tacitly to confess that there is more virtue in one heroic poem than in many tragedies. A man is humbled one day, and his pride returns the next. Chemical medicines are observed to relieve oftener than to cure: for 'tis the nature of spirits to make swift impressions, but not deep. Galenical decoctions,[2] to which I may properly compare an epic poem, have more of body in them; they work by their substance and their weight. It is one reason of Aristotle's to prove that tragedy is the more noble because it turns in a shorter compass; the whole action being circumscribed within the space of four-and-twenty hours. He might prove as well that a mushroom is to be preferred before a peach, because it shoots up in the compass of a night. A chariot may be driven round the pillar in less space than a large machine, because the bulk is not so great. Is the Moon a more noble planet than Saturn because she makes her revolution in less than thirty days, and he in little less than thirty years? Both their orbs are in proportion to their several magnitudes; and consequently the quickness or slowness of their motion, and the time of their circumvolutions, is no argument of the greater or less perfection. And besides, what virtue is there in a tragedy which is not contained in an epic poem, where pride is humbled,

[1] An inversion of Aristotle, *Poetics*, ch. vi: 'A tragedy is an imitation of an action . . . with incidents arousing pity and fear, to purge us of these emotions.' Cf. 'Heads of an Answer,' vol. I, p. 217n., above.

[2] I.e. natural, vegetable cures, as favoured by the Galenist physicians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in opposition to the new chemical remedies of the Paracelsians.

virtue rewarded, and vice punished; and those more amply treated than the narrowness of the drama can admit? The shining quality of an epic hero, his magnanimity, his constancy, his patience, his piety, or whatever characteristical virtue his poet gives him, raises first our admiration; we are naturally prone to imitate what we admire; and frequent acts produce a habit. If the hero's chief quality be vicious as, for example, the choler and obstinate desire of vengeance in Achilles, yet the moral is instructive: and besides, we are informed in the very proposition of the *Iliads*[1] that this anger was pernicious, that it brought a thousand ills on the Grecian camp. The courage of Achilles is proposed to imitation, not his pride and disobedience to his general, nor his brutal cruelty to his dead enemy, nor the selling of his body to his father. We abhor these actions while we read them; and what we abhor we never imitate. The poet only shews them, like rocks or quicksands, to be shunned.

By this example, the critics have concluded that it is not necessary the manners of the hero should be virtuous. They are poetically good, if they are of a piece: though where a character of perfect virtue is set before us, 'tis more lovely; for there the whole hero is to be imitated. This is the Æneas of our author; this is that idea of perfection in an epic poem which painters and statuaries have only in their minds, and which no hands are able to express. These are the beauties of a god in a human body. When the picture of Achilles is drawn in tragedy, he is taken with those warts, and moles, and hard features by those who represent him on the stage, or he is no more Achilles; for his creator Homer has so described him. Yet even thus he appears a perfect hero, though an imperfect character of virtue. Horace paints him after Homer, and delivers him to be copied on the stage with all those imperfections. Therefore they are either not faults in a heroic poem, or faults common to the drama. After all, on the whole merits of the cause, it must be acknowledged that the epic poem is more for the manners, and tragedy for the passions. The passions, as I have said, are violent; and acute distempers require medicines of a strong and speedy operation. Ill habits of the mind are like chronical diseases, to be corrected by degrees and cured by alternatives; wherein, though purges are sometimes necessary, yet diet, good

[1] *Iliad*, I.1-2.

air, and moderate exercise have the greatest part. The matter being thus stated, it will appear that both sorts of poetry are of use for their proper ends. The stage is more active; the epic poem works at greater leisure, yet is active too, when need requires; for dialogue is imitated by the drama from the more active parts of it. One puts off a fit like the quinquina, and relieves us only for a time; the other roots out the distemper, and gives a healthful habit. The sun enlightens and cheers us, dispels fogs, and warms the ground with his daily beams; but the corn is sowed, increases, is ripened, and is reaped for use in process of time, and in its proper season. I proceed from the greatness of the action to the dignity of the actors; I mean to the persons employed in both poems. There likewise tragedy will be seen to borrow from the epopee; and that which borrows is always of less dignity, because it has not of its own. A subject, 'tis true, may lend to his sovereign; but the act of borrowing makes the king inferior, because he wants, and the subject supplies. And suppose the persons of the drama wholly fabulous, or of the poet's invention, yet heroic poetry gave him the examples of that invention, because it was first, and Homer the common father of the stage. I know not of any one advantage which tragedy can boast above heroic poetry, but that it is represented to the view as well as read, and instructs in the closet as well as on the theatre. This is an uncontended excellence and a chief branch of its prerogative; yet I may be allowed to say, without partiality, that herein the actors share the poet's praise. Your Lordship knows some modern tragedies which are beautiful on the stage, and yet I am confident you would not read them. Tryphon the stationer[1] complains they are seldom asked for in his shop. The poet who flourished in the scene is damned in the ruelle;[2] nay more, he is not esteemed a good poet by those who see and hear his extravagances with delight. They are a sort of stately fustian and lofty childishness. Nothing but nature can give a sincere pleasure; where that is not imitated, 'tis grotesque painting; the fine woman ends in a fish's tail.

[1] Presumably Jacob Tonson, the publisher of the Virgil. Tryphon was a Greek grammarian and bookseller of the Rome of Augustus, mentioned by Martial (IV.72).

[2] I.e. reception, party; originally the passage between bed and wall, used by visitors at fashionable gatherings in the French manner at the bedside of a lady of rank.

I might also add that many things which not only please, but are real beauties in the reading, would appear absurd upon the stage; and those not only the *speciosa miracula*,[1] as Horace calls them, of transformations, of Scylla, Antiphates, and the Læstrygons, which cannot be represented even in operas; but the prowess of Achilles or Æneas would appear ridiculous in our dwarf heroes of the theatre. We can believe they routed armies, in Homer or in Virgil; but *ne Hercules contra duos* in the drama. I forbear to instance in many things which the stage cannot, or ought not to represent; for I have said already more than I intended on this subject, and should fear it might be turned against me, that I plead for the pre-eminence of epic poetry because I have taken some pains in translating Virgil; if this were the first time that I had delivered my opinion in this dispute. But I have more than once already maintained the rights of my two masters against their rivals of the scene, even while I wrote tragedies myself, and had no thoughts of this present undertaking. I submit my opinion to your judgment, who are better qualified than any man I know to decide this controversy. You come, my Lord, instructed in the cause, and needed not that I should open it. Your essay of poetry,[2] which was published without a name, and of which I was not honoured with the confidence, I read over and over with much delight, and as much instruction; and, without flattering you, or making myself more moral than I am, not without some envy. I was loath to be informed how an epic poem should be written, or how a tragedy should be contrived and managed, in better verse, and with more judgment, than I could teach others. A native of Parnassus, and bred up in the studies of its fundamental laws, may receive new lights from his contemporaries; but 'tis a grudging kind of praise which he gives his benefactors. He is more obliged than he is willing to acknowledge; there is a tincture of malice in his commendations. For where I own I am taught, I confess my want of knowledge. A judge upon the bench may, out of good nature, or at least interest, encourage

[1] *Ars poetica*, l. 144: 'wonderful tales.'

[2] *An Essay on Poetry* (1682). Dryden's disavowal of having seen the poem in manuscript is a wry comment on his alleged collaboration in Sheffield's previous poem, *An Essay upon Satire* (1679?), for which Dryden had been attacked and beaten in Rose Alley, Covent Garden, in December 1679.

the pleadings of a puny[1] counsellor; but he does not willingly commend his brother serjeant at the bar, especially when he controls his law, and exposes that ignorance which is made sacred by his place. I gave the unknown author his due commendation, I must confess; but who can answer for me and for the rest of the poets who heard me read the poem, whether we should not have been better pleased to have seen our own names at the bottom of the title-page? Perhaps we commended it the more, that we might seem to be above the censure. We are naturally displeased with an unknown critic, as the ladies are with a lampooner, because we are bitten in the dark, and know not where to fasten our revenge. But great excellencies will work their way through all sorts of opposition. I applauded rather out of decency than affection; and was ambitious, as some yet can witness, to be acquainted with a man with whom I had the honour to converse, and that almost daily, for so many years together. Heaven knows, if I have heartily forgiven you this deceit. You extorted a praise which I should willingly have given had I known you. Nothing had been more easy than to commend a patron of a long standing. The world would join with me, if the encomiums were just; and, if unjust, would excuse a grateful flatterer. But to come anonymous upon me, and force me to commend you against my interest, was not altogether so fair, give me leave to say, as it was politic. For by concealing your quality, you might clearly understand how your work succeeded, and that the general approbation was given to your merit, not your titles. Thus, like Apelles, you stood unseen behind your own Venus, and received the praises of the passing multitude;[2] the work was commended, not the author; and I doubt not this was one of the most pleasing adventures of your life.

I have detained your Lordship longer than I intended in this dispute of preference betwixt the epic poem and the drama, and yet have not formally answered any of the arguments which are brought by Aristotle on the other side, and set in the fairest light by Dacier.[3] But I suppose, without looking on the book, I may

[1] I.e. puisne, junior.

[2] Pliny, XXXV,xxxvi.84-5, where the story is told of the Greek painter who eavesdropped upon the comments of passers-by on his own picture—though Pliny does not mention that it was a painting of Venus.

[3] In *La poëtique d'Aristote traduit* (1692).

have touched on some of the objections; for, in this address to your Lordship, I design not a Treatise of Heroic Poetry, but write in a loose, epistolary way, somewhat tending to that subject after the example of Horace, in his First Epistle of the Second Book to Augustus Cæsar, and in that to the Piso's, which we call his *Art of Poetry*; in both of which he observes no method that I can trace, whatever Scaliger the father,[1] or Heinsius,[2] may have seen, or rather think they had seen. I have taken up, laid down, and resumed as often as I pleased, the same subject; and this loose proceeding I shall use thro' all this prefatory Dedication. Yet all this while I have been sailing with some side-wind or other toward the point I proposed in the beginning: the greatness and excellency of an heroic poem, with some of the difficulties which attend that work. The comparison, therefore, which I made betwixt the epopee and the tragedy was not altogether a digression; for 'tis concluded on all hands that they are both the masterpieces of human wit.

In the mean time, I may be bold to draw this corollary from what has been already said, that the file of heroic poets is very short; all are not such who have assumed that lofty title in ancient or modern ages, or have been so esteemed by their partial and ignorant admirers.

There have been but one great *Ilias* and one *Æneis* in so many ages. The next, but the next with a long interval betwixt, was the *Jerusalem*:[3] I mean not so much in distance of time, as in excellency. After these three are entered, some Lord Chamberlain should be appointed, some critic of authority should be set before the door, to keep out a crowd of little poets who press for admission and are not of quality. Mævius[4] would be deafening your Lordship's ears with his

fortunam, Priami cantabo, et nobile bellum;

mere fustian, as Horace would tell you from behind, without pressing forward, and more smoke than fire. Pulci, Boiardo, and

[1] Scaliger (1484-1558), in the introduction to his *Poetice*, actually denies Horace teaches any consistent art of poetry.

[2] Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655), the Dutch poet and editor of Horace.

[3] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581).

[4] The type of the poetaster (Horace, Tenth Epode) as the line 'Of Priam's fate and famous war I sing' (*Ars poetica*, l. 137) was Horace's parody of the over-ambitious epic opening. The good poet, Horace goes on (ll. 143f.), offers us 'not smoke after flame but, after smoke, light.'

Ariosto, would cry out, 'make room for the Italian poets, the descendants of Virgil in a right line': Father Le Moine, with his *Saint Louis*, and Scudéry with his *Alaric*, for a godly king and a Gothic conqueror; and Chapelain would take it ill that his *Maid* should be refused a place with Helen and Lavinia. Spenser has a better plea for his *Fairy Queen*, had his action been finished, or had been one. And Milton, if the Devil had not been his hero, instead of Adam;[1] if the giant had not foiled the knight, and driven him out of his stronghold, to wander through the world with his lady errant; and if there had not been more machining persons than human in his poem. After these, the rest of our English poets shall not be mentioned. I have that honour for them which I ought to have; but if they are worthies, they are not to be ranked amongst the three whom I have named, and who are established in their reputation.

Before I quitted the comparison betwixt epic poetry and tragedy, I should have acquainted my judge with one advantage of the former over the latter, which I now casually remember out of the preface of Segrais before his[2] translation of the *Æneis*, or out of Bossu, no matter which: 'the style of the heroic poem is, and ought to be, more lofty than that of the drama.' The critic is certainly in the right, for the reason already urged; the work of tragedy is on the passions, and in dialogue; both of them abhor strong metaphors, in which the epopee delights. A poet cannot speak too plainly on the stage: for *volat irrevocabile verbum*;[3] the sense is lost if it be not taken flying. But what we read alone, we have leisure to digest. There an author may

[1] Addison, in reply (*Spectator*, no. 297) denied the epic form demands a hero. 'But if he will needs fix the name of an hero upon any person in it, it is certainly the Messiah who is the hero, both in the principal action, and in the chief episodes.' Johnson, too, was evidently shocked by Dryden's remark, and in his Life of Milton restated the neo-classical position in a more flexible form: 'Dryden, petulantly and indecently, denied the heroism of Adam because he was overcome; but there is no reason why the hero should not be unfortunate, except established practice, since success and virtue do not necessarily go together.' Blake was evidently unaware of this controversy when he wrote, as a fresh discovery, in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790-3): 'The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of angels and God, and at liberty when of devils and Hell, is because he was a true poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it' (plate 6).

[2] Jean Regnauld de Segrais (1624-1701), whose *Eneïde* had appeared in two volumes in Paris in 1668. Its extensive preface and commentary are used by Dryden here as a quarry of facts concerning Virgil, and of orthodox critical statements to adopt or rebut.

[3] Horace, *Epistles*, I. xviii, 71 : 'the word flies forth, and cannot be recalled.'

beautify his sense by the boldness of his expression which, if we understand not fully at the first, we may dwell upon it till we find the secret force and excellence. That which cures the manners by alterative physic, as I said before, must proceed by insensible degrees; but that which purges the passions must do its business all at once, or wholly fail of its effect, at least in the present operation, and without repeated doses. We must beat the iron while 'tis hot, but we may polish it at leisure. Thus, my Lord, you pay the fine of my forgetfulness; and yet the merits of both causes are where they were, and undecided, till you declare whether it be more for the benefit of mankind to have their manners in general corrected, or their pride and hard-heartedness removed.

[There follows a defence of the *Aeneid*, explicitly based on Segrais's preface and on other commentaries, including support for Virgil's anti-republicanism, his conception of heroic virtues as expressed in the character of Æneas, the rôle of Dido in the poem, Virgil's anachronisms, his debt to Homer, his epic similes, and his time-scheme.]

But Virgil, who never attempted the lyric verse, is everywhere elegant, sweet, and flowing in his hexameters. His words are not only chosen, but the places in which he ranks them for the sound. He who removes them from the station wherein their master set them spoils the harmony. What he says of the Sibyl's prophecies[1] may be as properly applied to every word of his: they must be read in order as they lie; the least breath discomposes them; and somewhat of their divinity is lost. I cannot boast that I have been thus exact in my verses; but I have endeavoured to follow the example of my master, and am the first Englishman, perhaps, who made it his design to copy him in his numbers, his choice of words, and his placing them for the sweetness of the sound.[2] On this last consideration, I have

[1] *Aeneid*, VI.74-6.

[2] Dryden's claims for his own version are too vague to assess, and he shows little sign here of having examined earlier English translations of the *Aeneid* in any detail, whether those of Gavin Douglas (1553) and of Phaer (1573), or the versions of Surrey (1557), Stanyhurst (1582), John Vicars (1632), and James Harrington (1659). It is notable that Dryden does not mention any one of his predecessors by name in the course of the dedication. But for Dryden's hidden debt to his forerunners, especially in Book IV, cf. L. Proudfoot, *Dryden's Aeneid and its Seventeenth-Century Predecessors* (1960).

shunned the cæsura[1] as much as possibly I could; for, wherever that is used, it gives a roughness to the verse; of which we can have little need in a language which is overstocked with consonants. Such is not the Latin, where the vowels and consonants are mixed in proportion to each other: yet Virgil judged the vowels to have somewhat of an over-balance, and therefore tempers their sweetness with cæsuras. Such difference there is in tongues, that the same figure which roughens one gives majesty to another: and that was it which Virgil studied in his verses. Ovid uses it but rarely; and hence it is that his versification cannot so properly be called sweet as luscious. The Italians are forced upon it once or twice in every line, because they have a redundancy of vowels in their language. Their metal is so soft that it will not coin without alloy to harden it. On the other side, for the reason already named, 'tis all we can do to give sufficient sweetness to our language: we must not only choose our words for elegance, but for sound; to perform which, a mastery in the language is required; the poet must have a magazine of words, and have the art to manage his few vowels to the best advantage, that they may go the farther. He must also know the nature of the vowels, which are more sonorous and which more soft and sweet, and so dispose them as his present occasions require: all which, and a thousand secrets of versification beside, he may learn from Virgil, if he will take him for his guide. If he be above Virgil, and is resolved to follow his own *verve*[2] (as the French call it), the proverb will fall heavily upon him: *who teaches himself, has a fool for his master.*

Virgil employed eleven years upon his *Æneis*, yet he left it, as he thought himself, imperfect; which when I seriously consider I wish that, instead of three years which I have spent in the translation of his works, I had four years more allowed me

[1] Sidney, in his *Apology* (1595), had used the term in its modern sense, a 'breathing-space in the midst of the verse.' Dryden evidently thinks 'caesura' means elision, and uses the word so confidently in this sense that it may reflect contemporary usage: his term for caesura is probably 'breaking'; cf. preface to *Sylvae*, p. 24 and n., above. Dryden's case is based on a somewhat false analogy with Latin and Italian, since adjacent vowels in English are not usually subject to elision. Ben Jonson, in his *English Grammar*, II.i ('Of Apostrophes'), was clear, as Dryden is not, that in English elision is optional.

[2] I.e. talent, bent. This is the earliest recorded use of the French borrowing in English. The word did not acquire its present meaning of 'energy' until the nineteenth century.

to correct my errors, that I might make my version somewhat more tolerable than it is. For a poet cannot have too great a reverence for his readers, if he expects his labours should survive him. Yet I will neither plead my age nor sickness in excuse of the faults which I have made: that I wanted time, is all that I have to say; for some of my subscribers grew so clamorous that I could no longer defer the publication. I hope, from the candour of your Lordship, and your often experienced goodness to me, that if the faults are not too many you will make allowances with Horace:

> si plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
> offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
> aut humana parum cavit natura.[1]

You may please also to observe that there is not, to the best of my remembrance, one vowel gaping on another for want of a cæsura in this whole poem: but where a vowel ends a word, the next begins either with a consonant, or what is its equivalent; for our *w* and *h* aspirate, and our diphthongs, are plainly such. The greatest latitude I take is in the letter *y*, when it concludes a word, and the first syllable of the next begins with a vowel. Neither need I have called this a latitude, which is only an explanation of this general rule, that no vowel can be cut off before another when we cannot sink the pronunciation of it; as *he*, *she*, *me*, *I*, etc. Virgil thinks it sometimes a beauty to imitate the licence of the Greeks and leave two vowels opening on each other, as in that verse of the Third Pastoral,

> et sucus pecori, et lac subducitur agnis.[2]

But *nobis non licet esse tam disertis*,[3] at least if we study to refine our numbers. I have long had by me the materials of an English *prosodia*[4] containing all the mechanical rules of versifica-

[1] *Ars poetica*, ll. 351-3 ('ubi plura . . .'): 'If there are many beauties in the poem, I shall not take offence at a few blemishes which carelessness let slip or which are due to human frailty.'

[2] Eclogue III.6:

> Of grass and fodder thou defraud'st the dams,
> And of their mothers' dugs the starving lambs
> (Dryden, ll. 8-9).

[3] Martial, IX.11, 16: 'We may not be so skilful [who cultivate arts more severe than these].'

[4] This treatise was never realized. For an analysis of Dryden's metrical theories, see R. D. Jameson, 'Notes on Dryden's Lost Prosodia,' *Modern Philology*, xx (1923).

tion, wherein I have treated, with some exactness, of the feet, the quantities, and the pauses. The French and Italians know nothing of the two first; at least their best poets have not practised them. As for the pauses, Malherbe first brought them into France within this last century; and we see how they adorn their alexandrines. But, as Virgil propounds a riddle which he leaves unsolved—

> dic, quibus in terris, inscripti nomina regum
> nascantur flores, et Phyllida solus habeto.[1]

so I will give your Lordship another, and leave the exposition of it to your acute judgment. I am sure there are few who make verses, have observed the sweetness of these two lines in *Cooper's Hill*:

> Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
> Strong without rage; without o'erflowing, full.[2]

And there are yet fewer who can find the reason of that sweetness. I have given it to some of my friends in conversation, and they have allowed the criticism to be just. But since the evil of false quantities is difficult to be cured in any modern language; since the French and the Italians, as well as we, are yet ignorant what feet are to be used in heroic poetry; since I have not strictly observed those rules myself, which I can teach others; since I pretend to no dictatorship among my fellow-poets; since, if I should instruct some of them to make well-running verses, they want genius to give them strength as well as sweetness; and, above all, since your Lordship has advised me not to publish that little which I know, I look on your counsel as your command which I shall observe inviolably till you shall please to revoke it, and leave me at liberty to make my thoughts public. In the mean time, that I may arrogate nothing to myself, I must acknowledge that Virgil in Latin, and Spenser in English, have been my masters. Spenser has also give me the boldness to make use

[1] Eclogue III.106-7:
> Nay, tell me first, in what new region springs
> A flow'r that bears inscribed the names of kings
> (Dryden, ll. 163-4).

[2] ll. 191-2. This passage is the source of much eighteenth-century admiration for Denham as the pioneer of the Augustan style in verse: Johnson, in his Life of Dryden, quotes the couplet as a model of excellence, 'the flow . . . is so smooth and sweet.' Cf. Pope's parody of the passage in *Dunciad*, III.163-6.

sometimes of his alexandrine line, which we call, though improperly, the Pindaric, because Mr Cowley has often employed it in his *Odes*. It adds a certain majesty to the verse, when 'tis used with judgment, and stops the sense from overflowing into another line. Formerly the French, like us, and the Italians, had but five feet, or ten syllables, in their heroic verse; but since Ronsard's time,[1] as I suppose, they found their tongue too weak to support their epic poetry without the addition of another foot. That indeed has given it the run and measure of a trimeter; but it runs with more activity than strength: their language is not strung with sinews, like our English; it has the nimbleness of a greyhound, but not the bulk and body of a mastiff. Our men and our verses overbear them by their weight; and *pondere, non numero*[2] is the British motto. The French have set up purity for the standard of their language; and a masculine vigour is that of ours. Like their tongue is the genius of their poets, light and trifling in comparison of the English; more proper for sonnets, madrigals, and elegies, than heroic poetry. The turn on thoughts and words is their chief talent; but the epic poem is too stately to receive those little ornaments. The painters draw their nymphs in thin and airy habits; but the weight of gold and of embroideries is reserved for queens and goddesses. Virgil is never frequent in those turns, like Ovid, but much more sparing of them in his *Æneis* than in his *Pastorals* and *Georgics*.

ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere manes.[3]

That turn is beautiful indeed; but he employs it in the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, not in his great poem. I have used that licence in his *Æneis* sometimes; but I own it as my fault. 'Twas given to those who understand no better. 'Tis like Ovid's

semivirumque bovem, semibovemque virum.[4]

[1] Cf. Ronsard's unfinished epic, the *Franciade* (1572). But in fact the alexandrine had been a common metre in French verse since the twelfth century, long before Ronsard or Malherbe.

[2] 'By weight, not by number.'

[3] *Georgics*, IV.489:

A fault which easy pardon might receive,
Were lovers judges, or could Hell forgive
(Dryden, ll. 704-5).

[4] *Ars amatoria*, II.24 (order reversed), where the Minotaur is described as 'the bull half man, and the man half bull.'

The poet found it before his critics, but it was a darling sin which he would not be persuaded to reform.[1] The want of genius of which I have accused the French is laid to their charge by one of their own great authors,[2] though I have forgotten his name, and where I read it. If rewards could make good poets, their great master has not been wanting on his part in his bountiful encouragements: for he is wise enough to imitate Augustus, if he had a Maro. The triumvir and proscriber had descended to us in a more hideous form than they now appear, if the Emperor had not taken care to make friends of him and Horace. I confess, the banishment of Ovid was a blot in his escutcheon: yet he was only banished; and who knows but his crime was capital, and then his exile was a favour? Ariosto who, with all his faults, must be acknowledged a great poet, has put these words into the mouth of an Evangelist, but whether they will pass for gospel now I cannot tell.

Non fu si santo ni benigno Augusto,
Come la tuba di Virgilio suona;
L'haver havuto in poesia buon gusto,
La proscrittione iniqua gli perdona.[3]

But heroic poetry is not of the growth of France, as it might

[1] Seneca the Rhetor, *Controversiæ*, II.2: 'In his verse Ovid knew his own faults, but loved them. . . . Some of his friends asked him to delete three of his lines, and he asked to be allowed to choose those to be preserved. . . . The same lines appeared in both lists.'

[2] Ker suggests St Evremond, in his essay 'Some Observations upon the Taste and Judgment of the French' in *Miscellaneous Essays* (1692), the volume for which Dryden had written an introductory 'Character' (pp. 56-59, above): 'Although the ordinary genius of the French appears indifferent enough, it is certain that those who distinguish themselves amongst us are capable of producing the finest things.' But if Dryden were really unable to recall the name of his friend, his memory in his last years must have been sadly defective. It seems more likely that the name of René Rapin had slipped his memory, and the parallel, from his *Réflexions sur la poétique d'Aristote* (1674), as translated by Rymer, is a closer one: 'We may flatter ourselves with our wit, and the genius of our [the French] nation; but our soul is not enough exalted to frame great ideas, we are busied with petty subjects, and by that means it is that we prove so cold in the great . . .' (I.xxvi). Dryden's concern with Rapin had largely lapsed since the 1670's, the period of his debate with Rymer.

[3] *Orlando furioso* (1516-32), XXXV.26, where St John the Evangelist addresses Astolpho in Paradise: 'Augustus Caesar was by no means so pure and kindly as the trumpet of Virgil has proclaimed him; his good taste in poetry excuses his evil persecution.' The pun on 'gospel' is a sly hit at the neglect by William III of Dryden, though the poet had made no attempt to solicit the patronage of the new king.

be of England, if it were cultivated. Spenser wanted only to have read the rules of Bossu; for no man was ever born with a greater genius, or had more knowledge to support it. But the performance of the French is not equal to their skill; and hitherto we have wanted skill to perform better. Segrais, whose preface is so wonderfully good, yet is wholly destitute of elevation, though his version is much better than that of the two brothers,[1] or any of the rest who have attempted Virgil. Hannibal Caro[2] is a great name amongst the Italians; yet his translation of the *Æneis* is most scandalously mean, though he has taken the advantage of writing in blank verse, and freed himself from the shackles of modern rhyme, if it be modern; for Le Clerc has told us lately, and I believe has made it out, that David's Psalms were written in as arrant rhyme as they are translated.[3] Now if a Muse cannot run when she is unfettered, 'tis a sign she has but little speed. I will not make a digression here, though I am strangely tempted to it; but will only say that he who can write well in rhyme may write better in blank verse. Rhyme is certainly a constraint even to the best poets, and those who make it with most ease; though perhaps I have as little reason to complain of that hardship as any man, excepting Quarles and Withers. What it adds to sweetness, it takes away from sense; and he who loses the least by it may be called a gainer. It often makes us swerve from an author's meaning; as, if a mark be set up for an archer at a great distance, let him aim as exactly as he can, the least wind will take his arrow, and divert it from the white.

I return to our Italian translator of the *Æneis*. He is a foot-poet, he lacqueys by the side of Virgil at the best, but never mounts behind him. Doctor Morelli, who is no mean critic in our poetry, and therefore may be presumed to be a better in his own language, has confirmed me in his opinion by his judgment, and thinks, withal, that he has often mistaken his master's sense. I would say so, if I durst, but I am afraid I have committed the same fault more often, and more grossly; for I have forsaken Ruæus (whom generally I follow) in many places, and made

[1] Robert and Antoine le Chevallier d'Agneaux, whose translation had appeared in 1582.

[2] Cf. p. 22n., above.

[3] This arrant nonsense appears in the essay on Hebrew poetry in the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (1686-93), IX, p. 219, by the classical scholar Jean Le Clerc (1657-1736).

expositions of my own in some, quite contrary to him; of which I will give but two examples, because they are so near each other in the Tenth Æneid:

. . . sorti pater æquus utrique.[1]

Pallas says it to Turnus, just before they fight. Ruæus thinks that the word *pater* is to be referred to Evander, the father of Pallas. But how could he imagine that it was the same thing to Evander, if his son were slain, or if he overcame? The poet certainly intended Jupiter, the common father of mankind; who as Pallas hoped, would stand an impartial spectator of the combat, and not be more favourable to Turnus than to him. The second is not long after, and both before the duel is begun. They are the words of Jupiter, who comforts Hercules for the death of Pallas, which was immediately to ensue, and which Hercules could not hinder (though the young hero had addressed his prayers to him for his assistance) because the Gods cannot control Destiny. The verse follows:

sic ait; atque oculos Rutulorum rejicit arvis,[2]

which the same Ruæus thus construes: Jupiter, after he had said this, immediately turns his eyes to the Rutulian fields, and beholds the duel. I have given this place another exposition: that he turned his eyes from the field of combat, that he might not behold a sight so unpleasing to him. The word *rejicit*, I know, will admit of both senses; but Jupiter, having confessed that he could not alter Fate, and being grieved he could not, in consideration of Hercules, it seems to me that he should avert his eyes rather than take pleasure in the spectacle. But of this I am not so confident as the other, though I think I have followed Virgil's sense.

What I have said, though it has the face of arrogance, yet is intended for the honour of my country; and therefore I will

[1] *Aeneid*, X.450: 'my father is equal to [i.e. prepared for] either fate.' Dryden, misreading 'æquus' as 'indifferent,' has mistaken the sense of the line, which appears in his own version as:

Jove is impartial, and to both the same (X.633).

[2] *Aeneid*, X.473. Here Dryden has the better case. In his own version the line appears:

This said, the god permits the fatal fight,
But from the Latian fields averts his sight.
(X.665-6).

boldly own that this English translation has more of Virgil's spirit in it than either the French or the Italian. Some of our countrymen have translated episodes and other parts of Virgil, with great success; as particularly your Lordship, whose version of Orpheus and Eurydice[1] is eminently good. Amongst the dead authors, the Silenus of my Lord Roscommon cannot be too much commended. I say nothing of Sir John Denham, Mr Waller, and Mr Cowley;[2] 'tis the utmost of my ambition to be thought their equal, or not to be much inferior to them, and some others of the living. But 'tis one thing to take pains on a fragment, and translate it perfectly; and another thing to have the weight of a whole author on my shoulders. They who believe the burthen light, let them attempt the Fourth, Sixth, or Eighth Pastoral; the First or Fourth Georgic; and, amongst the Æneids, the Fourth, the Fifth, the Seventh, the Ninth, the Tenth, the Eleventh, or the Twelfth; for in these I think I have succeeded best.

Long before I undertook this work, I was no stranger to the original. I had also studied Virgil's design,[3] his disposition of it, his manners, his judicious management of the figures, the sober retrenchments of his sense, which always leaves somewhat to gratify our imagination, on which it may enlarge at pleasure; but, above all, the elegance of his expressions and the harmony of his numbers. For, as I have said in a former dissertation,[4] the words are in poetry what the colours are in painting; if the design be good, and the draught be true, the colouring is the first beauty that strikes the eye. Spenser and Milton are, in English, what Virgil and Horace are in Latin; and I have endeavoured to form my style by imitating their masters. I will farther own to you, my Lord, that my chief ambition is to please those readers who have discernment enough to prefer Virgil before any other poet in the Latin tongue. Such spirits as he

[1] The episode in *Georgics* IV, translated by Sheffield in the *Miscellany Poems* of 1684, which also contained Roscommon's version of Eclogue VI.

[2] Denham had translated *Aeneid* II and IV in his *Poems and Translations* (1668), Waller and Sidney Godolphin the Dido episode as *The Passion of Dido* (1658), and Cowley part of Georgics, II in *Several Discourses* (1668).

[3] Dryden had already translated the fourth and ninth Eclogues for *Miscellany Poems* (1684), four passages from the *Aeneid* in the *Sylvae* (1685), and the third Georgic in the fourth miscellany, *The Annual Miscellany* (1694). All these drafts were incorporated, with revisions, in the complete Virgil of 1697.

[4] Cf. *A Parallel betwixt Painting and Poetry*, p. 203, above.

desired to please, such would I choose for my judges, and would stand or fall by them alone. Segrais has distinguished the readers of poetry according to their capacity of judging, into three classes[1] (he might have said the same of writers too, if he had pleased): in the lowest form he places those whom he calls *les petits esprits*, such things as are our upper-gallery audience in a playhouse, who like nothing but the husk and rind of wit; prefer a quibble, a conceit, an epigram, before solid sense and elegant expression. These are mob readers: if Virgil and Martial stood for Parliament-men, we know already who would carry it. But, though they make the greatest appearance in the field, and cry the loudest, the best on't is, they are but a sort of French Huguenots, or Dutch boors, brought over in herds, but not naturalized; who have not land of two pounds *per annum*[2] in Parnassus, and therefore are not privileged to poll. Their authors are of the same level, fit to represent them on a mountebank's stage, or to be masters of the ceremonies in a bear-garden. Yet these are they who have the most admirers. But it often happens to their mortification that, as their readers improve their stock of sense (as they may by reading better books, and by conversation with men of judgment), they soon forsake them; and when the torrent from the mountains falls no more, the swelling writer is reduced into his shallow bed, like the Mançanares at Madrid, with scarce water to moisten his own pebbles. There are a middle sort of readers (as we hold there is a middle state of souls), such as have a farther insight than the former, yet have not the capacity of judging right; for I speak not of those who are bribed by a party, and know better if they were not corrupted; but I mean a company of warm young men who are not yet arrived so far as to discern the difference betwixt fustian, or ostentatious sentences, and the true sublime. These are above liking Martial, or Owen's Epigrams,[3] but they would certainly set Virgil below Statius or Lucan. I need not say their poets are of the same paste with their admirers. They affect greatness in all they write; but 'tis a bladdered greatness, like that of the vain man whom Seneca describes: an ill habit of body, full of humours, and swelled with dropsy.[4] Even these too desert their authors, as

[1] Preface, pp. 2-4. [2] I.e. ineligible to vote in parliamentary elections.
[3] John Owen (*c.* 1560-1622), whose eleven books of Latin epigrams had appeared between 1606 and 1613.
[4] *Epistulæ morales*,. cxi.

their judgment ripens. The young gentlemen themselves are commonly misled by their pedagogue at school, their tutor at the university, or their governor in their travels: and many of those three sorts are the most positive blockheads in the world. How many of those flatulent writers have I known, who have sunk in their reputation, after seven or eight editions of their works! for indeed they are poets only for young men. They had great success at their first appearance; but not being of God, as a wit said formerly, they could not stand.

I have already named two sorts of judges; but Virgil wrote for neither of them: and by his example I am not ambitious of pleasing the lowest or the middle form of readers.

He chose to please the most judicious: souls of the highest rank, and truest understanding. These are few in number; but whoever is so happy as to gain their approbation can never lose it, because they never give it blindly. Then they have a certain magnetism in their judgment, which attracts others to their sense. Every day they gain some new proselyte, and in time become the Church. For this reason, a well-weighed judicious poem, which at its first appearance gains no more upon the world than to be just received, and rather not blamed than much applauded, insinuates itself by insensible degrees into the liking of the reader: the more he studies it, the more it grows upon him; every time he takes it up, he discovers some new graces in it. And whereas poems which are produced by the vigour of imagination only have a gloss upon them at the first which time wears off, the works of judgment are like the diamond; the more they are polished, the more lustre they receive. Such is the difference betwixt Virgil's *Æneis* and Marini's *Adone*. And if I may be allowed to change the metaphor, I would say that Virgil is like the Fame which he describes:

mobilitate viget, viresque acquirit eundo.[1]

Such a sort of reputation is my aim, though in a far inferior degree, according to my motto in the title-page: *sequiturque patrem non passibus æquis*;[2] and therefore I appeal to the highest court of judicature, like that of the peers, of which your Lordship is so great an ornament.

[1] *Aeneid*, IV.175: 'Rumour grows with speed, and wins new strength as it goes.'

[2] *Aeneid*, II.724: 'He follows his father with unequal steps.'

Without this ambition, which I own, of desiring to please the *judices natos*, I could never have been able to have done any thing at this age, when the fire of poetry is commonly extinguished in other men. Yet Virgil has given me the example of Entellus for my encouragement: when he was well heated, the younger champion could not stand before him. And we find the elder contended not for the gift, but for the honour: *nec dona moror.*[1] For Dampier has informed us, in his *Voyages,*[2] that the air of the country which produces gold is never wholesome.

I had long since considered that the way to please the best judges is not to translate a poet literally, and Virgil least of any other: for his peculiar beauty lying in his choice of words, I am excluded from it by the narrow compass of our heroic verse, unless I would make use of monosyllables only, and those clogged with consonants, which are the dead weight of our mother-tongue. 'Tis possible, I confess, though it rarely happens, that a verse of monosyllables may sound harmoniously; and some examples of it I have seen. My first line of the *Æneis* is not harsh—

Arms and the man I sing, who, forc'd by fate, etc.

But a much better instance may be given from the last line of Manilius, made English by our learned and judicious Mr Creech:

Nor could the world have borne so fierce a flame.[3]

where the many liquid consonants are placed so artfully that they give a pleasing sound to the words, though they are all of one syllable.

'Tis true, I have been sometimes forced upon it in other places of this work: but I never did it out of choice; I was either in haste, or Virgil gave me no occasion for the ornament of words; for it seldom happens but a monosyllable line turns verse to prose; and even that prose is rugged and unharmonious.

[1] *Aeneid*, V.395-8, 400.

[2] Sir William Dampier, *A New Voyage round the World* (1697), of the climate of Ecuador: 'I know no place where gold is found but what is very unhealthy.'

[3] Thomas Creech (1659-1700), famous for his translation of Lucretius (1682), had dedicated his translation of Horace (1684) to Dryden. His version of Manilius (1697) had just appeared. Creech contributed a version of the thirteenth satire to Dryden's Juvenal (1693).

Philarchus,[1] I remember, taxes Balzac for placing twenty monosyllables in file, without one dissyllable betwixt them. The way I have taken is not so strait as metaphrase, nor so loose as paraphrase: some things too I have omitted, and sometimes have added of my own. Yet the omissions, I hope, are but of circumstances, and such as would have no grace in English; and the additions, I also hope, are easily deduced from Virgil's sense. They will seem (at least I have the vanity to think so) not stuck into him, but growing out of him. He studies brevity more than any other poet: but he had the advantage of a language wherein much may be comprehended in a little space. We, and all the modern tongues, have more articles and pronouns, besides signs of tenses and cases, and other barbarities on which our speech is built by the faults of our forefathers. The Romans founded theirs upon the Greek: and the Greeks, we know, were labouring many hundred years upon their language, before they brought it to perfection. They rejected all those signs, and cut off as many articles as they could spare; comprehending in one word what we are constrained to express in two; which is one reason why we cannot write so concisely as they have done. The word *pater*, for example, signifies not only *a* father, but *your* father, *my* father, *his* or *her* father, all included in a word.

This inconvenience is common to all modern tongues; and this alone constrains us to employ more words than the Ancients needed. But having before observed that Virgil endeavours to be short, and at the same time elegant, I pursue the excellence and forsake the brevity: for there he is like ambergris, a rich perfume, but of so close and glutinous a body that it must be opened with inferior scents of musk or civet, or the sweetness will not be drawn out into another language.

On the whole matter, I thought fit to steer betwixt the two extremes of paraphrase and literal translation; to keep as near my author as I could, without losing all his graces, the most eminent of which are in the beauty of his words; and those words, I must add, are always figurative. Such of these as would retain their elegance in our tongue, I have endeavoured to graff on it; but most of them are of necessity to be lost, because

[1] Jean Goulu de St François, *Lettres de Phyllarque à Ariste* (1627-8), letter xxi.

they will not shine in any but their own. Virgil has sometimes two or them in a line; but the scantiness of our heroic verse is not capable of receiving more than one; and that too must expiate for many others which have none. Such is the difference of the languages, or such my want of skill in choosing words. Yet I may presume to say, and I hope with as much reason as the French translator, that, taking all the materials of this divine author, I have endeavoured to make Virgil speak such English as he would himself have spoken, if he had been born in England, and in this present age. I acknowledge, with Segrais, that I have not succeeded in this attempt according to my desire: yet I shall not be wholly without praise, if in some sort I may be allowed to have copied the clearness, the purity, the easiness, and the magnificence of his style. But I shall have occasion to speak farther on this subject before I end the preface.

When I mentioned the Pindaric line, I should have added that I take another licence in my verses: for I frequently make use of triplet rhymes, and for the same reason, because they bound the sense. And therefore, I generally join these two licences together, and make the last verse of the triplet a Pindaric: for, besides the majesty which it gives, it confines the sense within the barriers of three lines, which would languish if it were lengthened into four. Spenser is my example for both these privileges of English verses;[1] and Chapman has followed him in his translation of Homer.[2] Mr Cowley has given in to them after both;[3] and all succeeding writers after him. I regard them now as the Magna Charta of heroic poetry, and am too much an Englishman to lose what my ancestors have gained for me. Let the French and Italians value themselves on their regularity; strength and elevation are our standard. I said before, and I repeat it, that the affected purity of the French has unsinewed their heroic verse. The language of an epic poem is almost

[1] Not for both. Spenser uses the alexandrine or 'Pindaric line' in the stanza of his invention, in the *Faerie Queene*, but always as a final line closing a couplet, never a triplet.

[2] Chapman never uses alexandrines in his Homer. His *Iliad* (1598-1611) is in rhyming fourteeners, his *Odyssey* (1615?) in heroic couplets. In the latter he uses triplets (e.g. I.152-4, II.79-81, 172-4), but without alexandrines.

[3] Cowley's use of the alexandrine in the *Davideis* (1656) is very slight: it occurs only out of sequence in the versions of the Psalms and in God's speech (Book IV).

wholly figurative: yet they are so fearful of a metaphor that no example of Virgil can encourage them to be bold with safety. Sure they might warn themselves by that sprightly blaze, without approaching it so close as to singe their wings; they may come as near it as their master. Not that I would discourage that purity of diction in which he excels all other poets. But he knows how far to extend his franchises, and advances to the verge, without venturing a foot beyond it. On the other side, without being injurious to the memory of our English Pindar, I will presume to say that his metaphors are sometimes too violent, and his language is not always pure. But at the same time I must excuse him; for through the iniquity of the times he was forced to travel, at an age when, instead of learning foreign languages, he should have studied the beauties of his mother-tongue which, like all other speeches, is to be cultivated early, or we shall never write it with any kind of elegance.[1] Thus, by gaining abroad, he lost at home; like the painter in the *Arcadia*,[2] who, going to see a skirmish, had his arms lopped off, and returned, says Sir Philip Sidney, well instructed how to draw a battle, but without a hand to perform his work.

There is another thing in which I have presumed to deviate from him and Spenser. They both make hemistichs (or half verses), breaking off in the middle of a line. I confess there are not many such in the *Fairy Queen*; and even those few might be occasioned by his unhappy choice of so long a stanza. Mr Cowley had found out that no kind of staff[3] is proper for a heroic poem, as being all too lyrical: yet, though he wrote in couplets, where rhyme is freer from constraint, he frequently affects half verses; of which we find not one in Homer, and I think not in any of the Greek poets, or the Latin, excepting only Virgil; and there is no question but he thought he had Virgil's authority for that licence. But, I am confident, our poet never meant to leave him, or any other, such a precedent: and I

[1] Because of his royalist sympathies Cowley was forced to live in France from 1646 to 1654—an experience quite unlikely to have affected the 'violence' of his metaphors, though it must be admitted he shared part of his exile in Paris with Crashaw.

[2] Sir Philip Sidney, *Arcadia* (1590), II.xxv.

[3] I.e. stanza. The unfinished *Davideis* (1656) is in heroic couplets. In a note to I.14, Cowley defends the use of half-verses, on the grounds that Virgil's 'authority alone is sufficient, especially in a thing that looks so naturally and gracefully.'

ground my opinion on these two reasons: first, we find no example of a hemistich in any of his *Pastorals* or *Georgics*; for he had given the last finishing strokes to both these poems: but his *Æneis* he left so uncorrect, at least so short of that perfection at which he aimed, that we know how hard a sentence he passed upon it; and in the second place, I reasonably presume that he intended to have filled up all those hemistichs, because in one of them we fine the sense imperfect:

quem tibi jam Troja . . .[1]

which some foolish grammarian has ended for him with a half line of nonsense:

. . . peperit fumante Creusa:

for Ascanius must have been born some years before the burning of that city; which I need not prove. On the other side, we find also that he himself filled up one line in the Sixth Æneid, the enthusiasm seizing him while he was reading to Augustus:

Misenum Æoliden, quo non præstantior alter
ære ciere viros . . .

to which he added, in that transport, *Martemque accendere cantu*:[2] and never was any line more nobly finished; for the reasons which I have given in the *Book of Painting*.[3] On these considerations I have shunned hemistichs; not being willing to imitate Virgil to a fault, like Alexander's courtiers, who affected to hold their necks awry, because he could not help it. I am confident your Lordship is by this time of my opinion, and that you will look on those half lines hereafter as the imperfect products of a hasty Muse; like the frogs and serpents in the Nile, part of them kindled into life, and part a lump of unformed, unanimated mud.

I am sensible that many of my whole verses are as imperfect as those halves, for want of time to digest them better: but give

[1] *Aeneid*, III.340.
[2] *Aeneid*, VI.164-5:

Misenus lay extended on the shore.
Son to the God of Winds, none so renown'd
The warrior trumpet in the field to sound,
With breathing brass to kindle fierce alarms
(Dryden, VI.242-5).

[3] Cf. *A Parallel betwixt Painting and Poetry* (1695), pp. 205-6, above.

me leave to make the excuse of Boccace who, when he was upbraided that some of his novels had not the spirit of the rest, returned this answer, that Charlemain, who made the Paladins, was never able to raise an army of them.[1] The leaders may be heroes, but the multitude must consist of common men.

I am also bound to tell your Lordship, in my own defence, that, from the beginning of the First Georgic to the end of the last Æneid, I found the difficulty of translation growing on me in every succeeding book. For Virgil, above all poets, had a stock, which I may call almost inexhaustible, of figurative, elegant, and sounding words. I, who inherit but a small portion of his genius, and write in a language so much inferior to the Latin, have found it very painful to vary phrases, when the same sense returns upon me. Even he himself, whether out of necessity or choice, has often expressed the same thing in the same words, and often repeated two or three whole verses which he had used before. Words are not so easily coined as money; and yet we see that the credit not only of banks but of exchequers cracks when little comes in and much goes out. Virgil called upon me in every line for some new word: and I paid so long, that I was almost bankrupt; so that the latter end must needs be more burdensome than the beginning or the middle; and, consequently, the Twelfth Æneid cost me double the time of the first and second. What had become of me, if Virgil had taxed me with another book? I had certainly been reduced to pay the public in hammered money, for want of milled; that is, in the same old words which I had used before: and the receivers must have been forced to have taken any thing, where there was so little to be had.

Besides this difficulty (with which I have struggled, and made a shift to pass it over), there is one remaining which is insuperable to all translators. We are bound to our author's sense, though with the latitudes already mentioned; for I think it not so sacred as that one iota must not be added or diminished, on pain of an anathema. But slaves we are, and labour on another man's plantation; we dress the vineyard, but the wine is the owner's: if the soil be sometimes barren, then we are sure of being scourged: if it be fruitful, and our care succeeds, we are not thanked; for the proud reader will only say, the poor drudge

[1] *Decamerone*, 'Conclusione dell'autore.'

has done his duty. But this is nothing to what follows; for being obliged to make his sense intelligible, we are forced to untune our own verses, that we may give his meaning to the reader. He who invents is master of his thoughts and words: he can turn and vary them as he pleases, till he renders them harmonious; but the wretched translator has no such privilege: for being tied to the thoughts, he must make what music he can in the expression; and, for this reason, it cannot always be so sweet as that of the original. There is a beauty of sound, as Segrais has observed, in some Latin words, which is wholly lost in any modern language. He instances in that *mollis amaracus* on which Venus lays Cupid[1] in the First Æneid. If I should translate it *sweet marjoram*, as the word signifies, the reader would think I had mistaken Virgil: for those village words, as I may call them, give us a mean idea of the thing; but the sound of the Latin is so much more pleasing, by the just mixture of the vowels with the consonants, that it raises our fancies to conceive somewhat more noble than a common herb, and to spread roses under him, and strew lilies over him; a bed not unworthy the grandson of the goddess.

If I cannot copy his harmonious numbers, how shall I imitate his noble flights, where his thoughts and words are equally sublime?

> quem quisquis studet æmulari,
> cæratis ope Dædalea
> nititur pennis, vitreo daturus
>   nomina ponto.[2]

What modern language, or what poet, can express the majestic beauty of this one verse amongst a thousand others?

> aude, hospes, contemnere opes, et te quoque dignum
> finge deo.[3]

For my part, I am lost in the admiration of it: I contemn the world when I think on it, and myself when I translate it.

[1] In fact Ascanius (*Aeneid*, I.691-4).

[2] From Horace, *Odes*, IV.ii.1-4 (of Pindar): 'Whoever would rival him supports himself on wings fastened in wax by Daedalus, and will surely give his name to the glassy sea.'

[3] *Aeneid*, VIII.364-5:

> Dare to be poor, accept our homely food
> Which feasted him, and emulate a god
> (Dryden, VIII.79-80).

Lay by Virgil, I beseech your Lordship and all my better sort of judges, when you take up my version; and it will appear a passable beauty when the original Muse is absent. But, like Spenser's false Florimel made of snow, it melts and vanishes when the true one comes in sight.[1]

I will not excuse, but justify myself, for one pretended crime, with which I am liable to be charged by false critics, not only in this translation, but in many of my original poems: that I latinize too much. 'Tis true that, when I find an English word significant and sounding, I neither borrow from the Latin or any other language; but when I want at home, I must seek abroad. If sounding words are not of our growth and manufacture, who shall hinder me to import them from a foreign country? I carry not out the treasure of the nation, which is never to return; but what I bring from Italy, I spend in England: here it remains, and here it circulates; for if the coin be good, it will pass from one hand to another. I trade both with the living and the dead, for the enrichment of our native language. We have enough in England to supply our necessity; but if we will have things of magnificence and splendour, we must get them by commerce. Poetry requires ornament; and that is not to be had from our old Teuton monosyllables; therefore, if I find any elegant word in a classic author, I propose it to be naturalized, by using it myself; and, if the public approves of it, the bill passes. But every man cannot distinguish between pedantry and poetry: every man, therefore, is not fit to innovate. Upon the whole matter, a poet must first be certain that the word he would introduce is beautiful in the Latin, and is to consider, in the next place, whether it will agree with the English idiom: after this, he ought to take the opinion of judicious friends, such as are learned in both languages. And, lastly, since no man is infallible, let him use this licence very sparingly; for if too many foreign words are poured in upon us, it looks as if they were designed not to assist the natives, but to conquer them.[2]

[1] *Faerie Queene*, V.iii.22-4.

[2] Cf. the *Aeneis*, IX.1094-5:

> His crest is rash'd away; his ample shield
> Is falsify'd, and round with jav'lins fill'd,

to which Dryden adds the following note to justify his Latinism: 'When I read this Aeneid to many of my friends in company together, most of them quarrelled at the word *falsify'd*, as an innovation in our language. The fact

I am now drawing towards a conclusion, and suspect your Lordship is very glad of it. But permit me first to own what helps I have had in this undertaking. The late Earl of Lauderdail[1] sent me over his new translation of the *Æneis* which he had ended before I engaged in the same design. Neither did I then intend it: but some proposals being afterwards made me by my bookseller, I desired his Lordship's leave that I might accept them, which he freely granted; and I have his letter yet to shew for that permission. He resolved to have printed his work; which he might have done two years before I could publish mine; and had performed it if death had not prevented him. But having his manuscript in my hands, I consulted it as often as I doubted of my author's sense; for no man understood Virgil better than that learned nobleman. His friends, I hear, have yet another and more correct copy of that translation by them which, had they pleased to have given the public, the judges must have been convinced that I have not flattered him. Besides this help, which was not inconsiderable, Mr Congreve has done me the favour to review the *Æneis*, and compare my version with the original. I shall never be ashamed to own that this excellent young man has shewed me many faults, which I have endeavoured to correct.

is confessed; for I remember not to have read it in any English author, though perhaps it may be found in Spenser's *Fairy Queen*. But suppose it be not there: why am I forbidden to borrow from the Italian (a polished language) the word which is wanting in my native tongue? Terence has often Grecized: Lucretius has followed his example, and pleaded for it, *sic quia me cogit patrii sermonis egestas*. Virgil has confirmed it by his frequent practice.' And he continues with a reference to Ariosto's use of *falsare* in the *Orlando Furioso*, XXVI.124: 'I use the word *falsify* in this place to mean that the shield of Turnus was not of proof against the spears and javelins of the Trojans, which had pierced it through and through (as we say) in many places' (p. 636). *OED* shows *falsify* as early as 1449. It occurs once in Shakespeare (*I Henry IV*, I.2.235), but nowhere in Spenser. Dryden's use of *falsify* meaning 'to pierce,' however, is probably unique, and suggests how closely he was reading Ariosto in the last decade of his life.

[1] Richard Maitland (1653-95), fourth Earl of Lauderdale, had translated the *Aeneid* as a Jacobite exile in Paris early in the 1690's, largely incorporating the first three of the four translations by Dryden of passages from Books V, VIII, IX, and X, published in the *Sylvæ* in 1685. Macdonald (pp. 323-4) plausibly suggests that 'Dryden first intended to allow Lauderdale to incorporate these passages in his translation, but subsequently deciding to translate Virgil himself, requested Lauderdale to delete them and substitute his own version.' This theory seems to fit the deliberately vague language of the dedication, above. But cf. Proudfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 234 n., ch. xi. Lauderdale's *The Works of Virgil Translated into English Verse* was posthumously published by Lintot in an undated volume (1718?).

'Tis true, he might have easily found more, and then my translation had been more perfect.

Two other worthy friends of mine,[1] who desire to have their names concealed, seeing me straitened in my time, took pity on me, and gave me the Life of Virgil, the two prefaces to the *Pastorals* and the *Georgics*, and all the arguments in prose to the whole translation; which, perhaps, has occasioned a report that the two first poems are not mine. If it had been true, that I had taken their verses for my own, I might have gloried in their aid and, like Terence, have farthered the opinion that Scipio and Lælius joined with me. But the same style being continued thro' the whole, and the same laws of versification observed, are proofs sufficient that this is one man's work: and your Lordship is too well acquainted with my manner to doubt that any part of it is another's.

That your Lordship may see I was in earnest when I promised to hasten to an end, I will not give the reasons why I writ not always in the proper terms of navigation, land-service, or in the cant of any profession.[2] I will only say that Virgil has avoided those proprieties because he writ not to mariners, soldiers, astronomers, gardeners, peasants, etc., but to all in general, and in particular to men and ladies of the first quality, who have been better bred than to be too nicely knowing in the terms. In such cases, 'tis enough for a poet to write so plainly that he may be understood by his readers; to avoid impropriety, and not affect to be thought learned in all things.

I have omitted the four preliminary lines of the First Æneid, because I think them inferior to any four others in the whole poem, and consequently believe they are not Virgil's. There is too great a gap betwixt the adjective *vicina* in the second line, and the substantive *arva* in the latter end of the third, which keeps his meaning in obscurity too long, and is contrary to the clearness of his style.

[1] Joseph Addison contributed the preface to the *Georgics* and the prose arguments, Knightly Chetwood the preface to the *Pastorals* and 'The Life of Pub. Virgilius Maro.'

[2] A seeming retraction of his defence of technical terms in poetry in the preface to *Annus Mirabilis*, vol. I, p. 96, above. But Dryden is hardly contradicting himself in this instance: the reason he offers for avoiding technical terms in the *Aeneis* is that Virgil avoids them too—a translator's point, and one which hardly touches the heart of Dryden's theory of poetic diction.

ut quamvis avido[1]

is too ambitious an ornament to be his; and

gratum opus agricolis

are all words unnecessary, and independent of what he had said before.

horrentia Martis
arma

is worse than any of the rest. *Horrentia* is such a flat epithet as Tully would have given us in his verses. 'Tis a mere filler, to stop a vacancy in the hexameter, and connect the preface to the work of Virgil. Our author seems to sound a charge, and begins like the clangour of a trumpet:

arma, virumque cano, Trojæ qui primus ab oris.

Scarce a word without an *r*, and the vowels, for the greater part, sonorous. The prefacer began with *ille ego*, which he was constrained to patch up in the fourth line with *at nunc*, to make the sense cohere; and if both those words are not notorious botches, I am much deceived, though the French translator thinks otherwise. For my own part, I am rather of the opinion that they were added by Tucca and Varius[2] than retrenched.

I know it may be answered by such as think Virgil the author of the four lines that he asserts his title to the *Æneis* in the beginning of his work, as he did to the two former in the last lines of the Fourth Georgic. I will not reply otherwise to this than by desiring them to compare these four lines with the four others, which we know are his, because no poet but he alone could write them. If they cannot distinguish creeping from flying, let them lay down Virgil and take up Ovid *De Ponto*,[3] in his stead.

[1] The apocryphal prelude, commonly printed in early texts of the *Aeneid*:

ille ego, qui quondam gracili modulatus avena
carmen, et egressus silvis vicina coegi
ut quamvis avido parerent arva colono,
gratum opus agricolis, at nunc horrentia Martis . . . .

For Dryden's translation, see p. 256, below.

[2] Friends of Virgil, to whom the poet bequeathed his writings. They were said to have finished the *Aeneid* at the orders of Augustus Caesar.

[3] I.e. the verse epistle *Ex Ponto*, written by the exiled poet from the shores of the Black Sea.

My master needed not the assistance of that preliminary poet to prove his claim. His own majestic mien discovers him to be the king amidst a thousand courtiers. It was a superfluous office; and therefore, I would not set those verses in the front of Virgil, but have rejected them to my own preface.

> I, who before, with shepherds in the groves,
> Sung to my oaten pipe their rural loves,
> And issuing thence, compell'd the neighbouring field
> A plenteous crop of rising corn to yield,
> Manur'd the glebe, and stock'd the fruitful plain,
> (A poem grateful to the greedy swain), &c.

If there be not a tolerable line in all these six, the prefacer gave me no occasion to write better. This is a just apology in this place; but I have done great wrong to Virgil in the whole translation: want of time, the inferiority of our language, the inconvenience of rhyme, and all the other excuses I have made, may alleviate my fault, but cannot justify the boldness of my undertaking. What avails it me to acknowledge freely that I have not been able to do him right in any line? For even my own confession makes against me; and it will always be returned upon me: why then did you attempt it? To which no other answer can be made than that I have done him less injury than any of his former libellers.

What they called his picture had been drawn at length, so many times, by the daubers of almost all nations, and still so unlike him that I snatched up the pencil with disdain; being satisfied beforehand that I could make some small resemblance of him, though I must be content with a worse likeness. A sixth *Pastoral*, a *Pharmaceutria*,[1] a single *Orpheus*, and some other features, have been exactly taken: but those holiday authors writ for pleasure; and only shewed us what they could have done if they would have taken pains to perform the whole.

Be pleased, my Lord, to accept, with your wonted goodness, this unworthy present which I make you. I have taken off one trouble from you, of defending it, by acknowledging its imperfections: and though some part of them are covered in the verse

[1] I.e. the eighth Eclogue, of which Stafford and Chetwood each contributed versions to *Miscellany Poems* (1684).

(as Erichthonius rode always in a chariot, to hide his lameness[1]), such of them as cannot be concealed you will please to connive at, though in the strictness of your judgment you cannot pardon. If Homer was allowed to nod sometimes in so long a work, it will be no wonder if I often fall asleep. You took my *Aureng-Zebe* into your protection, with all his faults:[2] and I hope here cannot be so many, because I translate an author who gives me such examples of correctness. What my jury may be, I know not; but 'tis good for a criminal to plead before a favourable judge: if I had said partial, would your Lordship have forgiven me? or will you give me leave to acquaint the world that I have many times been obliged to your bounty since the Revolution? Though I never was reduced to beg a charity, nor even had the impudence to ask one, either of your Lordship, or your noble kinsman the Earl of Dorset, much less of any other; yet, when I least expected it, you have both remembered me: so inherent it is in your family not to forget an old servant. It looks rather like ingratitude on my part that, where I have been so often obliged, I have appeared so seldom to return my thanks, and where I was also so sure of being well received. Somewhat of laziness was in the case, and somewhat too of modesty, but nothing of disrespect or of unthankfulness. I will not say that your Lordship has encouraged me to this presumption, lest, if my labours meet with no success in public, I may expose your judgment to be censured. As for my own enemies, I shall never think them worth an answer; and if your Lordship has any, they will not dare to arraign you for your want of knowledge in this art, till they can produce somewhat better of their own than your *Essay on Poetry*. 'Twas on this consideration that I have drawn out my preface to so great a length. Had I not addressed to a poet and a critic of the first magnitude, I had myself been taxed for want of judgment, and shamed my patron for want of understanding. But neither will you, my Lord, so soon be tired as any other, because the discourse is on your art; neither will the learned reader think it tedious, because it is *ad clerum*. At least, when he begins to be weary, the church doors are open. That I may pursue the allegory with a short prayer, after a long sermon:

May you live happily and long, for the service of your country, the encouragement of good letters, and the ornament of poetry;

[1] Cf. *Georgics*, III.113. [2] Cf. vol. I, pp. 190-4, above.

which cannot be wished more earnestly by any man, than by
Your Lordship's most humble,
Most obliged, and most obedient servant,
JOHN DRYDEN.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE READER

Appended to the *Æneis* (1697)

THE POET'S AGE AND ISOLATION—HIS PATRONS

Cf. p. 223, above.

WHAT Virgil wrote in the vigour of his age, in plenty and at ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years; struggling with wants, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write; and my judges, if they are not very equitable, already prejudiced against me by the lying character which has been given them of my morals. Yet steady to my principles, and not dispirited with my afflictions, I have, by the blessing of God on my endeavours, overcome all difficulties and, in some measure, acquitted myself of the debt which I owed the public when I undertook this work. In the first place, therefore, I thankfully acknowledge to the Almighty Power the assistance He had given me in the beginning, the prosecution, and conclusion of my present studies, which are more happily performed than I could have promised to myself, when I laboured under such discouragements. For, what I have done, imperfect as it is for want of health and leisure to correct it, will be judged in after-ages, and possibly in the present, to be no dishonour to my native country, whose language and poetry would be more esteemed abroad, if they were better understood. Somewhat (give me leave to say) I have added to both of them in the choice of words, and harmony of numbers, which were wanting, especially the last, in all our poets, even in those who, being endued with genius, yet have not cultivated their mother-tongue with sufficient care; or, relying on the beauty of their thoughts, have judged the ornament of words, and sweetness of

sound, unnecessary. One is for raking in Chaucer (our English Ennius) for antiquated words, which are never to be revived, but when sound or significancy is wanting in the present language. But many of his deserve not this redemption, any more than the crowds of men who daily die, or are slain for sixpence in a battle, merit to be restored to life, if a wish could revive them. Others have no ear for verse, nor choice of words, nor distinction of thoughts; but mingle farthings with their gold to make up the sum. Here is a field of satire opened to me: but, since the Revolution, I have wholly renounced that talent. For who would give physic to the great, when he is uncalled? To do his patient no good, and endanger himself for his prescription? Neither am I ignorant but I may justly be condemned for many of those faults of which I have too liberally arraigned others.

Cynthius aurem
vellit, et admonuit.[1]

'Tis enough for me, if the Government will let me pass unquestioned. In the mean time, I am obliged, in gratitude, to return my thanks to many of them, who have not only distinguished me from others of the same party, by a particular exception of grace, but, without considering the man, have been bountiful to the poet: have encouraged Virgil to speak such English as I could teach him, and rewarded his interpreter for the pains he has taken in bringing him over into Britain, by defraying the charges of his voyage. Even Cerberus, when he had received the sop, permitted Æneas to pass freely to Elysium. Had it been offered me, and I had refused it, yet still some gratitude is due to such who were willing to oblige me; but how much more to those from whom I have received the favours which they have offered to one of a different persuasion! Amongst whom I cannot omit naming the Earls of Derby and of Peterborough.[2] To the first of these I have not the honour to be known; and therefore his liberality [was] as much unexpected as it was undeserved. The present Earl of Peterborough has been

[1] Virgil, Eclogue VI, ll. 3-4: 'the Cynthian plucked my ear and warned me', i.e. against writing an epic.

[2] William Stanley (1655?-1702), ninth Earl of Derby, and Charles Mordaunt (1658-1735), third Earl of Peterborough. Peterborough was an early and devoted supporter of William III—hence the reserved tone of Dryden's commendation.

pleased long since to accept the tenders of my service: his favours are so frequent to me that I receive them almost by prescription. No difference of interests or opinion have been able to withdraw his protection from me; and I might justly be condemned for the most unthankful of mankind, if I did not always preserve for him a most profound respect and inviolable gratitude. I must also add that, if the last Æneid shine amongst its fellows, 'tis owing to the commands of Sir William Trumball,[1] one of the principal Secretaries of State, who recommended it, as his favourite, to my care; and for his sake particularly I have made it mine. For who would confess weariness, when he enjoined a fresh labour? I could not but invoke the assistance of a Muse, for this last office.

extremum hunc, Arethusa . . .
neget quis carmina Gallo?[2]

Neither am I to forget the noble present which was made me by Gilbert Dolben, Esq.,[3] the worthy son of the late Archbishop of York, who, when I began this work, enriched me with all the several editions of Virgil, and all the commentaries of those editions in Latin; amongst which, I could not but prefer the Dolphin's,[4] as the last, the shortest, and the most judicious. Fabrini[5] I had also sent me from Italy; but either he understands Virgil very imperfectly, or I have no knowledge of my author.

Being invited by that worthy gentlemen, Sir William Bowyer,[6] to Denham Court, I translated the first Georgic at his house, and the greatest part of the last Æneid. A more friendly entertainment no man ever found. No wonder, therefore, if both those versions surpass the rest, and own the satisfaction I received in his converse, with whom I had the honour to be

[1] Sir William Trumball (1639-1716), who was a Secretary of State from 1695 to 1697.

[2] Virgil, Eclogue X.1-3: 'My last (task), Arethusa . . . Who would refuse to Gallus songs?'

[3] Gilbert Dolben (1658-1722), M.P., a barrister.

[4] The Delphin edition of Ruaeus, published in Paris in 1675—Dryden's chief text of Virgil in this translation.

[5] Giovanni Fabrini, whose Italian translation of Virgil appeared with a commentary in 1604-23.

[6] Sir William Bowyer (1639-1722), a younger Cambridge friend at whose country seat Dryden seems to have spent much of his time. Both men had been members of Trinity College, Cambridge.

bred in Cambridge, and in the same college. The seventh Æneid was made English at Burleigh, the magnificent abode of the Earl of Exeter.[1] In a village belonging to his family I was born; and under his roof I endeavoured to make that Æneid appear in English with as much lustre as I could; though my author has not given the finishing strokes either to it, or to the eleventh, as I perhaps could prove in both, if I durst presume to criticise my master.

By a letter from Will. Walsh of Abberley, Esq. (who has so long honoured me with his friendship and who, without flattery, is the best critic of our nation), I have been informed this his Grace the Duke of Shrewsbury[2] has procured a printed copy of the *Pastorals*, *Georgics*, and six first Æneids, from my bookseller, and has read them in the country, together with my friend. This noble person having been pleased to give them a commendation, which I presume not to insert, has made me vain enough to boast of so great a favour, and to think I have succeeded beyond my hopes; the character of his excellent judgment, the acuteness of his wit, and his general knowledge of good letters, being known as well to all the world as the sweetness of his disposition, his humanity, his easiness of access, and desire of obliging those who stand in need of his protection, are known to all who have approached him; and to me in particular, who have formerly had the honour of his conversation. Whoever has given the world the translation of part of the third Georgic, which he calls 'The Power of Love',[3] has put me to sufficient pains to make my own not inferior to his; as my Lord Roscommon's 'Silenus'[4] had formerly given me the same trouble. The most ingenious Mr Addison[5] of Oxford has also been as troublesome to me as the other two, and on the same account. After his 'Bees,' my latter swarm is scarcely worth the

[1] John Cecil (1648-1700), fifth Earl of Exeter, who owned Burghley House in Northamptonshire. Dryden had been born nearby in 1631, at Aldwinkle.

[2] Charles Talbot (1660-1718), twelfth Earl and first (and last) Duke of Shrewsbury, a major figure in the government of William III.

[3] '*Amor omnibus idem*: or The Force of Love in All Creatures,' in *Examen poeticum* (1693) which, according to Malone, may have been by Lord Lansdowne, author of the preceding poem.

[4] The sixth eclogue, which Roscommon had translated, as well as Horace's *Ars poetica*, and two of his Odes.

[5] Joseph Addison (1672-1719), who had translated much of the fourth Georgic, on the habits of bees, for *The Annual Miscellany* (1694).

hiving. Mr Cowley's 'Praise of a Country Life'[1] is excellent, but 'tis rather an imitation of Virgil than a version. That I have recovered, in some measure, the health which I had lost by too much application to this work, is owing, next to God's mercy, to the skill and care of Dr Guibbons and Dr Hobbs, the two ornaments of their profession, whom I can only pay by this acknowledgment. The whole faculty has always been ready to oblige me; and the only one of them[2] who endeavoured to defame me had it not in his power. I desire pardon from my readers for saying so much, in relation to myself, which concerns not them; and with my acknowledgements to all my subscribers, have only to add that the few notes which follow are *par manière d'acquit*, because I had obliged myself by articles to do somewhat of that kind.[3] These scattering observations are rather guesses at my author's meaning in some passages than proofs that so he meant. The unlearned may have recourse to any poetical dictionary in English for the names of persons, places, or fables, which the learned need not: but that little which I say is either new or necessary. And the first of these qualifications never fails to invite a reader, if not to please him.

[1] Probably his version of *Georgics*, II.458f., 'O fortunatos nimium' in his *Several Discourses by Way of Essays in Verse and Prose*, first printed in the posthumous *Works* of 1668.

[2] Sir Richard Blackmore (1653-1729) who like William G(u)ibbons and Hobbs, was a physician. He was to be appointed Court physician to William III in 1697. He had attacked Dryden as 'Laurus' in his *Prince Arthur* (1695): 'an old, revolted, unbelieving bard.' Dryden attacked again in his preface to *Fables*, p. 292, below, to which Blackmore retorted in *A Satire against Wit* (1700).

[3] Cf. Dryden's letter to Tonson (*Ward*, no. 36), probably written early in 1695: 'I am not sorry that you will not allow any thing [i.e. a fee] towards the Notes; for to make them good would have cost me half a year's time at least. Those I write shall be only marginal, to help the unlearned who understand not the poetical fables. The prefaces, as I intend them, will be somewhat more learned.' Dryden had by this time translated the first eight books of the *Aeneid*, and seems already determined to write an ambitious preface and scanty notes.

LETTER TO SAMUEL PEPYS
14 July 1699

CHAUCER'S GOOD PARSON—THE FABLES

Text: the ms. is in the Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge, in Pepys's copy of the *Fables* of 1700. On the back is a reply by Pepys, of the same date. First published by Malone; *Ward*, no. 61.

The letter suggests the long intimacy between Dryden and Pepys (who mentions him several times in his diary), begun as undergraduates at Cambridge in the 1650's. Pepys was the younger man by two years.

July the 14th
—99

PADRON MIO,[1]

I REMEMBER, last year, when I had the honour of dining with you, you were pleased to recommend to me the character of Chaucer's Good Parson. Any desire of yours is a command to me; and accordingly I have put it into my English, with such additions and alterations as I thought fit. Having translated as many fables from Ovid, and as many novels from Boccace, and tales from Chaucer,[2] as will make an indifferent large volume in folio, I intend them for the press in Michaelmas Term next. In the meantime, my Parson desires the favour of being known

[1] I do not know why Dryden should address his friend in jocular Italian, unless it be a reaction from his adaptations of Boccaccio.

[2] The *Fables*, as they appeared in 1700, including six episodes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as well as all of Book XII and the account of Pythagorean philosophy in Book XV. From the *Decamerone* of Boccaccio Dryden included three tales, and from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* the Knight's Tale ('Palamon and Arcite'), the Nun's Priest's Tale ('The Cock and the Fox'), the Wife of Bath's Tale, and 'The Character of a Good Parson, Imitated from Chaucer and Inlarged,' as well as 'The Flower and the Leaf,' regarded at that time as Chaucerian. Dryden's portrait of the Good Parson is almost three times as long as Chaucer's in the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, and may represent a disguised tribute to the nonjuring clergy.

to you; and promises, if you find any fault with his character, he will reform it; whenever you please he shall wait on you; and for the safer conveyance I will carry him in my pocket; who am

my *padron*'s most obedient servant

JOHN DRYDEN.

For Samuel Pepys, Esq.
at his house in York-street,
these

LETTER TO CHARLES MONTAGUE,

later Earl of Halifax
October 1699?

THE PROPOSAL TO TRANSLATE HOMER

Text: the ms. is in the British Museum (Add.ms.12112). It was first published by Malone; *Ward*, no. 65.

The letter is undated and unaddressed, and I have followed Malone's guesses in both instances. Montague, as founder of the Bank of England, had just been forced to resign from the Chancellorship of the Exchequer in the previous May, but was to be appointed Auditor on 18 November.

SIR,

THESE verses had waited on you with the former;[1] but they then wanted that correction which I have since given them, that they may the better endure the sight of so great a judge and poet. I am now in fear that I have purged them out of their spirit; as our Master Busby[2] used to whip a boy so long, till he made him a confirmed blockhead. My cousin Driden[3] saw them in the country; and the greatest exception he made to them was a satire against the Dutch valour in the late war. He desired me to omit it (to use his own words) out of the respect he had

[1] In a letter to Mrs Steward of 7 November 1699, Dryden mentioned having sent the Earl of Dorset and Montague the verses to his cousin Driden printed in the *Fables* and those addressed to the Duchess of Ormond, and remarked that they 'are of opinion that I never writ better. My other friends are divided in their judgments which to prefer: but the greater part are for those to my dear kinsman, which I have corrected with so much care that they will now be worthy of his sight, and do neither of us any dishonour after our death' (Ward, no. 67).

[2] Richard Busby (1606-95), master at Westminster School from 1639 till his death, whose severity Dryden had suffered as a schoolboy. In spite of this, he had dedicated his translation of the fifth satire of Persius to Busby in 1693, and sent both his sons to be educated by him.

[3] John Driden of Chesterton (1635-1708), Member of Parliament for Huntingdon.

to his sovereign. I obeyed his commands, and left only the praises, which I think are due to the gallantry of my own countrymen.

In the description I have made of a Parliament man, I think I have not only drawn the features of my worthy kinsman, but have also given my own opinion of what an Englishman in Parliament ought to be; and deliver it as a memorial of my own principles to all prosperity. I have consulted the judgment of my unbiassed friends, who have some of them the honour to be known to you; and they think there is nothing which can justly give offence in that part of the poem. I say not this to cast a blind on your judgment (which I could not do, if I endeavoured it), but to assure you that nothing relating to the public shall stand without your permission. For it were to want common sense to desire your patronage and resolve to disoblige you: and as I will not hazard my hopes of your protection by refusing to obey you in any thing which I can perform with my conscience or my honour, so I am very confident you will never impose any other terms on me.

My thoughts at present are fixed on Homer; and by my translation of the first Iliad[1] I find him a poet more according to my genius than Virgil, and consequently hope I may do him more justice in his fiery way of writing which, as it is liable to more faults, so it is capable of more beauties than the exactness and sobriety of Virgil. Since 'tis for my country's honour as well as for my own that I am willing to undertake this task, I despair not of being encouraged in it by your favour, who am, Sir,

your most obedient servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

[1] In *Fables* (1700).

LETTER TO ELIZABETH THOMAS
November 1699?

APHRA BEHN—THEOCRITUS AND VIRGIL

Text: the letter, for which there is no ms., was first published with two other letters to Elizabeth Thomas in *Miscellanea* (1727) (*Macdonald*, p. 185), and later by Malone; *Ward*, no. 69.

The letter is undated, but ascribed by Malone to November 1699. It is the second of the three surviving letters from Dryden to Elizabeth Thomas, the other two being of no literary interest. Elizabeth Thomas ('Corinna') was a young woman of good family who was acquainted with Dryden in the last year of his life (1699-1700). She apparently had aspirations to become a poet. Malone discredited much of her account of Dryden's death and funeral, which she seems to have sold to the publisher Edmund Curll for his *Memoirs of Congreve* (1730) (*Macdonald*, no. 332).

MADAM,

THE great desire which I observe in you to write well, and those good parts which God Almighty and nature have bestowed on you, make me not to doubt that by application to study and the reading of the best authors you may be absolute mistress of poetry. 'Tis an unprofitable art to those who profess it; but you, who write for your diversion, may pass your hours with pleasure in it and without prejudice, always avoiding (as I know you will) the licences which Mrs Behn allowed herself of writing loosely and giving (if I may have leave to say so) some scandal to the modesty of her sex.[1] I confess I am the last man who ought, in justice, to arraign her, who have been myself too much a libertine in most of my poems, which I

[1] Dryden certainly knew Aphra Behn (1640-89): she had contributed to his Ovid (1680). In a preface to her comedy *The Dutch Lover* (1673) she calls him 'our most unimitable Laureate,' though she later wrote a satire against him (*Works*, ed. Montague Summers (1915), vi.400). During her youth in Surinam she had allegedly had a love-affair with an Indian chief (cf. her novel *Oroonoko*), boasted of the admiration of many suitors while a spy in the Netherlands for Charles II, and rivalled other Restoration dramatists in the indelicacy of her many comedies.

should be well contented I had time either to purge or to see them fairly burned.[1] But this I need not say to you, who are too well born, and too well principled, to fall into that mire.

In the mean time, I would advise you not to trust too much to Virgil's Pastorals; for, as excellent as they are, yet Theocritus is far before him, both in softness of thought and simplicity of expression. Mr Creech has translated that Greek poet,[2] which I have not read in English. If you have any considerable faults, they consist chiefly in the choice of words and the placing them so as to make the verse run smoothly; but I am at present so taken up with my own studies that I have not leisure to descend to particulars; being in the meantime the fair Corinna's

most humble and most
faithful servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

P.S. I keep your two copies till you want them, and are pleased to send for them.

[1] Jeremy Collier had recently attacked Dryden, among others, in his *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698); cf. preface to *Fables*, p. 293, below.

[2] Thomas Creech (1659-1700), *Idylliums of Theocritus Done into English* (1684). Six of Theocritus' poems had been translated into English by an unknown Elizabethan, *Six Idillia* (1588), but Creech's was the first complete English version. Dryden himself had translated four idyllia (nos. 3, 18, 23, 27), in the first and second miscellanies; cf. his praise for Theocritus' 'tenderness' in the preface to the *Sylvae*, p. 30, above.

PREFACE

to *Fables Ancient and Modern, Translated into Verse from Homer, Ovid, Boccace, and Chaucer, with Original Poems* (1700)

HOMER, OVID, CHAUCER, BOCCACCIO—REPLY TO MILBOURNE, BLACKMORE, COLLIER

Text: folio, 1700.

Dryden began work on the Fables soon after the appearance of the 1697 Virgil, and signed an agreement with Tonson in March 1699. The folio appeared in March 1700, some weeks before his death (1 May 1700).

The preface, Dryden's last critical work, is a minor masterpiece in the manner of his later prose: relaxed, fluent, and frankly egotistical after the example of Montaigne. It falls into two sections. First, there is a discursive essay on the art of translating poetry, which summarizes theories of translation he had been expounding for twenty years, since the preface to *Ovid's Epistles Translated* (1680); decorated with many revealing asides upon Dryden's own method of work and upon his comparative judgment of four ancient and medieval poets. Second, there follow some elegant abuse of two contemporary poetasters, and a frank and humble acknowledgement to Jeremy Collier of his past offences against propriety. The account of Dryden's thirty-six years as a critic closes, not uncharacteristically, upon a note of invective. But it is the unembittered invective of a master controversialist certain of his own intellectual superiority, an echo in magnificent prose of the 'fine raillery' of the verse satires of the early eighties: ''tis not bloody, but 'tis ridiculous enough.'

'Tis with a poet as with a man who designs to build, and is very exact, as he supposes, in casting up the cost beforehand; but, generally speaking, he is mistaken in his account, and reckons short of the expense he first intended: he alters his mind as the work proceeds, and will have this or that convenience more of which he had not thought when he began. So has it happened to me; I have built a house where I intended but a lodge; yet

with better success than a certain nobleman,[1] who, beginning with a dog-kennel, never lived to finish the palace he had contrived.

From translating the first of Homer's *Iliads* (which I intended as an essay to the whole work), I proceeded to the translation of the twelfth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, because it contains, among other things, the causes, the beginning, and ending, of the Trojan War. Here I ought in reason to have stopped; but the speeches of Ajax and Ulysses[2] lying next in my way, I could not balk 'em. When I had compassed them, I was so taken with the former part of the fifteenth book[3] (which is the masterpiece of the whole *Metamorphoses*), that I enjoined myself the pleasing task of rendering it into English. And now I found, by the number of my verses, that they began to swell into a little volume; which gave me an occasion of looking backward on some beauties of my author, in his former books: there occurred to me the Hunting of the Boar, Cinyras and Myrrha, the good-natured story of Baucis and Philemon,[4] with the rest, which I hope I have translated closely enough, and given them the same turn of verse which they had in the original; and this, I may say, without vanity, is not the talent of every poet. He who has arrived the nearest to it, is the ingenious and learned Sandys,[5] the best versifier of the former age; if I may properly call it by that name, which was the former part of this concluding century. For Spenser and Fairfax both flourished in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; great masters in our language, and who saw much farther into the beauties of our numbers than those who immediately followed them. Milton was the poetical son of Spenser, and Mr Waller of Fairfax; for we have our lineal descents and clans as well as other families: Spenser more than once insinuates that the soul of Chaucer was transfused into his body; and that he was begotten by him two hundred years after his decease.[6]

[1] Probably George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham and favourite to Charles II. Brian Fairfax, in his *Life of Buckingham* (1758), reported that he 'fell into a new way of expense in building, in that sort of architecture which Cicero calls *insanæ substructiones* . . .'

[2] *Metamorphoses*, VIII.

[3] 'Of the Pythagorean Philosophy.'

[4] *Metamorphoses*, VIII, X, VIII.

[5] Cf. preface to *Examen poeticum*, p. 164, above, where there is a much less favourable estimate of Sandys' *Metamorphosis* (1626).

[6] *Faerie Queene*, IV.ii.34. Dryden had already toyed with the idea of 'lineal descent' in poetry in the second stanza of the ode 'To Mrs Anne Killigrew' (1686); but it remains a mere hint of an historical technique in criticism which he never lived to develop.

Milton has acknowledged to me that Spenser was his original;[1] and many besides myself have heard our famous Waller own that he derived the harmony of his numbers from *Godfrey of Bulloign*, which was turned into English by Mr Fairfax.

But to return: having done with Ovid for this time, it came into my mind that our old English poet, Chaucer, in many things resembled him, and that with no disadvantage on the side of the modern author, as I shall endeavour to prove when I compare them; and as I am, and always have been, studious to promote the honour of my native country, so I soon resolved to put their merits to the trial, by turning some of the *Canterbury Tales* into our language, as it is now refined; for by this means, both the poets being set in the same light and dressed in the same English habit, story to be compared with story, a certain judgment may be made betwixt them by the reader, without obtruding my opinion on him: or, if I seem partial to my countryman and predecessor in the laurel, the friends of antiquity are not few; and besides many of the learned, Ovid has almost all the beaux, and the whole fair sex, his declared patrons. Perhaps I have assumed somewhat more to myself than they allow me, because I have adventured to sum up the evidence; but the readers are the jury, and their privilege remains entire to decide according to the merits of the cause: or, if they please, to bring it to another hearing before some other court. In the mean time, to follow the thread of my discourse (as thoughts, according to Mr Hobbes, have always some connection[2]), so from Chaucer I was led to think on Boccace, who was not only his contemporary, but also pursued the same studies; wrote novels in prose, and many works in verse; particularly is said to have invented the octave rhyme,[3] or stanza of eight lines, which ever since has been maintained by the practice of all Italian writers who are, or at least assume the title of, heroic poets. He and Chaucer, among other things, had this in common, that they refined their mother-tongues; but with this difference, that Dante had begun to file their language, at least in verse, before the time of Boccace,

[1] For the meagre evidence concerning Dryden's acquaintance with Milton, cf. preface to *The State of Innocence*, vol. I, p. 196n., above.

[2] *Leviathan* (1651), I.iii, where Hobbes develops his theory of the association of ideas or 'train of thoughts.'

[3] Boccaccio did not invent *ottava rima*, but he gave it dignity as the chief stanza for Italian narrative verse, as in Ariosto and Tasso. It was introduced into English by Wyatt.

who likewise received no little help from his master Petrarch; but the reformation of their prose was wholly owing to Boccace himself, who is yet the standard of purity in the Italian tongue; though many of his phrases are become obsolete, as in process of time it must needs happen. Chaucer (as you have formerly been told by our learned Mr Rymer[1]) first adorned and amplified our barren tongue from the Provençal,[2] which was then the most polished of all the modern languages; but this subject has been copiously treated by that great critic, who deserves no little commendation from us his countrymen.

For these reasons of time, and resemblance of genius, in Chaucer and Boccace, I resolved to join them in my present work; to which I have added some original papers of my own,[3] which whether they are equal or inferior to my other poems, an author is the most improper judge; and therefore I leave them wholly to the mercy of the reader. I will hope the best, that they will not be condemned; but if they should, I have the excuse of an old gentleman who, mounting on horseback before some ladies, when I was present, got up somewhat heavily, but desired of the fair spectators that they would count fourscore and eight before they judged him. By the mercy of God, I am already come within twenty years of his number; a cripple in my limbs, but what decays are in my mind the reader must determine. I think myself as vigorous as ever in the faculties of my soul, excepting only my memory, which is not impaired to any great degree; and if I lose not more of it, I have no great reason to complain. What judgment I had, increases rather than diminishes; and thoughts, such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me that my only difficulty is to choose or to reject, to run them into verse or to give them the other harmony of prose:[4] I have so long studied and practised both that they are grown

[1] *A Short View of Tragedy* (1693), ch. vi: 'Chaucer . . . seizes all Provençal, French, or Latin that came in his way, gives them a new garb and livery, and mingles them amongst our English: turns out English, gouty or superannuated, to place in their room the foreigners, fit for service, trained and accustomed to poetical discipline.' There is no hint here of the hostility against Rymer that exploded in the preface to *Examen poeticum* (1693), pp. 159f., above; Dryden's respect for his scholarship evidently survived to the end.

[2] I.e. Old French. Cf. p. 289, below.

[3] The folio of 1700 includes commendatory verses 'To the Duchess of Ormond,' 'To John Dryden,' and 'The Monument of a Fair Maiden Lady.'

[4] Cf. *Poetics*, ch. iv, where Aristotle speaks of the human instinct for 'harmony and rhythm' leading to the birth of metre.

into a habit, and become familiar to me. In short, though I may lawfully plead some part of the old gentleman's excuse, yet I will reserve it till I think I have greater need, and ask no grains of allowance for the faults of this my present work, but those which are given of course to human frailty. I will not trouble my reader with the shortness of time in which I writ it,[1] or the several intervals of sickness. They who think too well of their own performances are apt to boast in their prefaces how little time their works have cost them, and what other business of more importance interfered; but the reader will be as apt to ask the question, why they allowed not a longer time to make their works more perfect? and why they had so despicable an opinion of their judges as to thrust their indigested stuff upon them, as if they deserved no better?

With this account of my present undertaking, I conclude the first part of this discourse: in the second part, as at a second sitting, though I alter not the draught, I must touch the same features over again, and change the dead-colouring[2] of the whole. In general, I will only say that I have written nothing which savours of immorality or profaneness; at least, I am not conscious to myself of any such intention. If there happen to be found an irreverent expression, or a thought too wanton, they are crept into my verses through my inadvertency: if the searchers find any in the cargo, let them be staved[3] or forfeited, like counterbanded goods; at least, let their authors be answerable for them, as being but imported merchandise, and not of my own manufacture. On the other side, I have endeavoured to choose such fables, both ancient and modern, as contain in each of them some instructive moral; which I could prove by induction, but the way is tedious, and they leap foremost into sight without the reader's trouble of looking after them. I wish I could affirm, with a safe conscience, that I had taken the same

[1] Dryden was certainly at work on some of the fables as early as 1698. In a letter to Mrs Elizabeth Steward (*Ward*, no. 57) written in the winter of 1698-9, he complained of his health, adding: 'I am still drudging on: always a poet, and never a good one. I pass my time sometimes with Ovid, and sometimes with our old English poet, Chaucer; translating such stories as best please my fancy; and intend besides them to add somewhat of my own: so that it is not impossible but ere the summer be passed I may come down to you with a volume in my hand, like a dog out of the water with a duck in his mouth.'

[2] I.e. a first layer of colour.

[3] I.e. crushed inwards, destroyed, like contraband barrels of wine.

care in all my former writings; for it must be owned that, supposing verses are never so beautiful or pleasing, yet, if they contain anything which shocks religion or good manners, they are at best what Horace says of good numbers without good sense, *versus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ.*[1] Thus far, I hope, I am right in court, without renouncing to my other right of self-defence, where I have been wrongfully accused, and my sense wire-drawn into blasphemy or bawdry, as it has often been by a religious lawyer,[2] in a late pleading against the stage; in which he mixes truth with falsehood, and has not forgotten the old rule of calumniating strongly, that something may remain.

I resume the thread of my discourse with the first of my translations, which was the first Iliad of Homer. If it shall please God to give me longer life, and moderate health, my intentions are to translate the whole *Ilias*;[3] provided still that I meet with those encouragements from the public which may enable me to proceed in my undertaking with some cheerfulness. And this I dare assure the world beforehand, that I have found, by trial, Homer a more pleasing task than Virgil (though I say not the translation will be less laborious). For the Grecian is more according to my genius than the Latin poet. In the works of the two authors we may read their manners and natural inclinations, which are wholly different. Virgil was of a quiet, sedate temper: Homer was violent, impetuous, and full of fire. The chief talent of Virgil was propriety of thoughts, and ornament of words: Homer was rapid in his thoughts, and took all the liberties, both of numbers and of expressions, which his language, and the age in which he lived, allowed him. Homer's invention was more copious, Virgil's more confined: so that if Homer had not led the way, it was not in Virgil to have begun heroic poetry. For

[1] *Ars poetica*, l. 322: 'verses lacking substance and pleasing trifles.'

[2] Jeremy Collier (1650–1726), a lecturer at Gray's Inn. His *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698) led him into controversies with Congreve and Farquhar; but Dryden accepted his strictures in all humility. After all, Collier's moral indignation against the stage only echoes Dryden's own in the fourth stanza of his ode 'To Mrs Anne Killigrew' (1686):

> O gracious God! How far have we
> Prophan'd thy heav'nly gift of poesy?
> Made prostitute and profligate the Muse. . . .

Cf. letter to Montague, p. 266, above.

nothing can be more evident than that the Roman poem is but the second part of the *Ilias*; a continuation of the same story, and the persons already formed. The manners of Æneas are those of Hector, superadded to those which Homer gave him. The adventures of Ulysses in the *Odysseis* are imitated in the first six books of Virgil's *Æneis*; and though the accidents are not the same (which would have argued him of a servile copying, the total barrenness of invention), yet the seas were the same in which both the heroes wandered; and Dido cannot be denied to be the poetical daughter of Calypso. The six latter books of Virgil's poem are the four-and-twenty *Iliads* contracted: a quarrel occasioned by a lady, a single combat, battles fought, and a town besieged. I say not this in derogation to Virgil, neither do I contradict any thing which I have formerly said in his just praise: for his episodes are almost wholly of his own invention, and the form which he has given to the telling makes the tale his own, even though the original story had been the same. But this proves, however, that Homer taught Virgil to design; and if invention be the first virtue of an epic poet, then the Latin poem can only be allowed the second place. Mr Hobbes, in the preface to his own bald translation of the *Ilias*, (studying poetry as he did mathematics, when it was too late), Mr Hobbes, I say, begins the praise of Homer where he should have ended it.[1] He tells us that the first beauty of an epic poem consists in diction; that is, in the choice of words, and harmony of numbers. Now the words are the colouring of the work, which, in the order of nature, is last to be considered. The design, the disposition, the manners, and the thoughts, are all before it: where any of those are wanting or imperfect, so much wants or is imperfect in the imitation of human life, which is in the very definition of a poem. Words, indeed, like glaring colours, are the first beauties that arise and strike the sight; but if the draught be false or lame, the figures ill disposed, the manners obscure or inconsistent, or the thoughts unnatural, then the finest colours are but daubing, and the piece is a beautiful monster at the best. Neither Virgil nor Homer were deficient

[1] Shortly before his death in 1679, Hobbes had translated the whole of Homer into execrable quatrains. His version appeared in 1676, with a preface 'Concerning the Virtues of an Heroic Poem.' But, though he mentions 'the choice of words' first among the virtues, he does not seem to lay any emphasis upon the order in which he considers them.

in any of the former beauties; but in this last, which is expression, the Roman poet is at least equal to the Grecian, as I have said elsewhere; supplying the poverty of his language by his musical ear, and by his diligence.

But to return: our two great poets, being so different in their tempers, one choleric and sanguine, the other phlegmatic and melancholic; that which makes them excel in their several ways is that each of them has followed his own natural inclination, as well in forming the design as in the execution of it. The very heroes shew their authors: Achilles is hot, impatient, revengeful,

impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer, etc.'[1]

Æneas patient, considerate, careful of his people, and merciful to his enemies; ever submissive to the will of heaven,

quo fata trahunt retrahuntque, sequamur.[2]

I could please myself with enlarging on this subject, but am forced to defer it to a fitter time. From all I have said, I will only draw this inference, that the action of Homer, being more full of vigour than that of Virgil, according to the temper of the writer, is of consequence more pleasing to the reader. One warms you by degrees; the other sets you on fire all at once, and never intermits his heat. 'Tis the same difference which Longinus makes betwixt the effects of eloquence in Demosthenes and Tully; one persuades, the other commands.[3] You never cool while you read Homer, even not in the second book (a graceful flattery to his countrymen); but he hastens from the ships, and concludes not that book till he has made you an amends by the violent playing of a new machine.[4] From thence he hurries on his action with variety of events, and ends it in less compass than two months. This vehemence of his, I confess, is more suitable to my temper; and, therefore, I have translated his first book with greater pleasure than any part of Virgil. But it was not a pleasure without pains: the continual agitations of the spirits must needs be a weakening of any constitution, especially in

[1] Horace, *Ars poetica*, l. 121: 'restless, wrathful, obdurate, fierce.'
[2] *Aeneid*, V.709: 'wherever the Fates may bear us, let us follow.'
[3] *On the Sublime*, ch. xii.
[4] In fact Agamemnon's dream comes before the catalogue of the ships in the second book of the *Iliad*.

age; and many pauses are required for refreshment betwixt the heats; the *Iliad* of itself being a third part longer than all Virgil's works together.

This is what I thought needful in this place to say of Homer. I proceed to Ovid and Chaucer; considering the former only in relation to the latter. With Ovid ended the golden age of the Roman tongue: from Chaucer the purity of the English tongue began. The manners of the poets were not unlike: both of them were well-bred, well-natured, amorous, and libertine, at least in their writings, it may be also in their lives. Their studies were the same, philosophy and philology.[1] Both of them were knowing in astronomy, of which Ovid's books of the *Roman Feasts*, and Chaucer's *Treatise of the Astrolabe*, are sufficient witnesses. But Chaucer was likewise an astrologer, as were Virgil, Horace, Persius, and Manilius. Both writ with wonderful facility and clearness; neither were great inventors: for Ovid only copied the Grecian fables, and most of Chaucer's stories were taken from his Italian contemporaries, or their predecessors.[2] Boccace his *Decameron* was first published, and from thence our Englishman has borrowed many of his *Canterbury Tales*: yet that of *Palamon and Arcite* was written in all probability by some Italian wit, in a former age, as I shall prove hereafter. The tale of Grizild was the invention of Petrarch; by him sent to Boccace, from whom it came to Chaucer.[3] *Troilus and Cressida* was also written by a Lombard author,[4] but much amplified by our English translator, as well as beautified; the genius of our countrymen in general being rather to improve an invention than to invent themselves; as is evident not only in our poetry, but in many of our manufactures. I find I have anticipated already, and taken up from Boccace before I come to him: but there is so much less behind; and I am of the temper of most kings, who

[1] I.e. the study of literature.

[2] Dryden's knowledge of Chaucer's sources is derived from Speght's edition of 1598, which had recently been reprinted (1687). He remained unaware that the Knight's Tale ('Palamon and Arcite') was based on Boccaccio's *Teseida*.

[3] Petrarch had translated the story of Griselda into Latin from the Italian of *Decamerone*, X.10, as 'De obedientia ac fide uxoria mythologia,' and sent his version to Boccaccio. The 'De obedientia' is certainly Chaucer's source for the Clerk's Tale, and his knowledge of the *Decamerone* remains unproven.

[4] Dryden, like Speght, was unaware that Chaucer's source for *Troilus and Criseide* was Boccaccio's *Filostrato*.

love to be in debt, are all for present money, no matter how they pay it afterwards.[1] Besides, the nature of a preface is rambling, never wholly out of the way, nor in it. This I have learned from the practice of honest Montaigne, and return at my pleasure to Ovid and Chaucer, of whom I have little more to say.

Both of them built on the inventions of other men; yet since Chaucer had something of his own, as *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, *The Cock and the Fox*,[2] which I have translated, and some others, I may justly give our countryman the precedence in that part; since I can remember nothing of Ovid which was wholly his. Both of them understood the manners; under which name I comprehend the passions and, in a larger sense, the descriptions of persons, and their very habits.[3] For an example, I see Baucis and Philemon as perfectly before me, as if some ancient painter had drawn them; and all the Pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales*, their humours, their features, and the very dress, as distinctly as if I had supped with them at the Tabard in Southwark. Yet even there, too, the figures of Chaucer are much more lively, and set in a better light; which though I have not time to prove, yet I appeal to the reader, and am sure he will clear me from partiality.

The thoughts and words remain to be considered, in the comparison of the two poets, and I have saved myself one half of that labour by owning that Ovid lived when the Roman tongue was in its meridian; Chaucer, in the dawning of our language: therefore that part of the comparison stands not on an equal foot, any more than the diction of Ennius and Ovid, or of Chaucer and our present English. The words are given up, as a post not to be defended in our poet, because he wanted the modern art of fortifying. The thoughts remain to be considered; and they are to be measured only by their propriety; that is, as they flow more or less naturally from the persons described, on such and such occasions. The vulgar judges, which are nine

[1] A sneer at William III, who was borrowing heavily to pay for the war against Louis XIV.

[2] The source of the story of the Loathly Lady of the Wife of Bath's Tale is unknown, but it is certainly not a Chaucerian invention. The Nun's Priest's Tale is probably based on a number of French sources, notably the *Roman de Renart*.

[3] For an earlier definition of 'manners,' cf. 'The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy,' vol. I, p. 248, above.

parts in ten of all nations, who call conceits and jingles wit, who see Ovid full of them, and Chaucer altogether without them, will think me little less than mad for preferring the Englishman to the Roman. Yet, with their leave, I must presume to say that the things they admire are only glittering trifles, and so far from being witty that in a serious poem they are nauseous, because they are unnatural. Would any man, who is ready to die for love, describe his passion like Narcissus? Would he think of *inopem me copia fecit*,[1] and a dozen more of such expressions, poured on the neck of one another, and signifying all the same thing? If this were wit, was this a time to be witty, when the poor wretch was in the agony of death? This is just John Littlewit, in *Bartholomew Fair*, who had a conceit (as he tells you) left him in his misery; a miserable conceit.[2] On these occasions the poet should endeavour to raise pity: but instead of this, Ovid is tickling you to laugh. Virgil never made use of such machines when he was moving you to commiserate the death of Dido: he would not destroy what he was building. Chaucer makes Arcite violent in his love, and unjust in the pursuit of it; yet when he came to die, he made him think more reasonably: he repents not of his love, for that had altered his character; but acknowledges the injustice of his proceedings, and resigns Emilia to Palamon. What would Ovid have done on this occasion? He would certainly have made Arcite witty on his death-bed; he had complained he was farther off from possession, by being so near, and a thousand such boyisms,[3] which Chaucer rejected as below the dignity of the subject. They who think otherwise would, by the same reason, prefer Lucan and Ovid to Homer and Virgil, and Martial to all four of them. As for the turn of words, in which Ovid particularly excels all poets, they are sometimes a fault, and sometimes a beauty, as they are used properly or improperly; but in strong passions always to be shunned, because passions are serious, and will admit no playing. The French have a high value for them; and, I confess, they are often what they call delicate, when they

[1] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, III.466: 'my wealth makes me poor.'

[2] Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair* (1631), I.i, where Littlewit enters, saying 'A pretty conceit, and worth the finding! I ha' such luck to spin out these fine things still, and like a silkworm, out of myself.'

[3] I.e. trivialities—the earliest recorded use, and never a common one.

are introduced with judgment; but Chaucer writ with more simplicity, and followed nature more closely than to use them. I have thus far, to the best of my knowledge, been an upright judge betwixt the parties in competition, not meddling with the design nor the disposition of it; because the design was not their own; and in the disposing of it they were equal. It remains that I say somewhat of Chaucer in particular.

In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil. He is a perpetual fountain of good sense; learned in all sciences; and therefore speaks properly on all subjects. As he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off; a continence which is practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the Ancients, excepting Virgil and Horace. One of our late great poets[1] is sunk in his reputation, because he could never forgive any conceit which came in his way; but swept like a drag-net, great and small. There was plenty enough, but the dishes were ill sorted; whole pyramids of sweetmeats for boys and women, but little of solid meat for men. All this proceeded not from any want of knowledge, but of judgment; neither did he want that in discerning the beauties and faults of other poets; but only indulged himself in the luxury of writing; and perhaps knew it was a fault, but hoped the reader would not find it. For this reason, though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer; and for ten impressions which his works have had in so many successive years, yet at present a hundred books are scarcely purchased once a twelve-month;[2] for, as my last Lord Rochester said, though somewhat profanely, *Not being of God, he could not stand.*

Chaucer followed nature everywhere; but was never so bold to go beyond her; and there is a great difference of being *poeta* and *nimis poeta*, if we may believe Catullus,[3] as much as

[1] Evidently Abraham Cowley (1618-67), whose poems Dryden had loved and imitated in his youth; cf. 'A Discourse on Satire,' p. 150 and n., above.

[2] Dryden may be speaking on the authority of his publisher Tonson, and must be believed. But reprints of Cowley's poems remained remarkably steady throughout the later seventeenth century, and did not fall off till the 1720's. The *Works* of 1668, which includes *The Mistress*, the Pindaric Odes and the unfinished epic *Davideis*, was reprinted by Herringman at least eleven times before 1700, usually at intervals of three years or less.

[3] A mistake for Martial, III.44.4.

betwixt a modest behaviour and affectation. The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us; but 'tis like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends, it was *auribus istius temporis accommodata*:[1] they who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it musical; and it continues so, even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lydgate and Gower, his contemporaries: there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect. 'Tis true, I cannot go so far as he who published the last edition of him;[2] for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables in a verse where we find but nine. But this opinion is not worth confuting; 'tis so gross and obvious an error that common sense (which is a rule in every thing but matters of faith and revelation) must convince the reader that equality of numbers, in every verse which we call *heroic*, was either not known, or not always practised, in Chaucer's age. It were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwise. We can only say that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the first. We must be children before we grow men. There was an Ennius, and in process of time a Lucilius, and a Lucretius, before Virgil and Horace; even after Chaucer there was a Spenser, a Harington, a Fairfax, before Waller and Denham were in being; and our numbers were in their nonage till these last appeared. I need say little of his parentage, life, and fortunes; they are to be found at large in all the editions of his works. He was employed abroad, and favoured by Edward the Third, Richard the Second, and Henry the Fourth, and was poet, as I suppose, to all three of them. In Richard's time, I doubt, he was

[1] *De oratoribus*, xxi ('auribus iudicum accommodata'): 'suited to the ears of another age.'

[2] Thomas Speght, who in a note to his second edition (1602) suggested, more wisely than Dryden, that Chaucer's verses could be made to scan, though he remained uncertain how: 'Although in divers places they may seem to us to stand of unequal measures; yet a skilful reader that can scan them in their nature shall find it otherwise. . . .' Tyrwhitt, in his edition of the *Canterbury Tales* (1775-8), which included 'An Essay upon his Language and Versification,' demonstrated the basic principles of Chaucerian metre, so that Scott was able to censure Dryden 'for pronouncing rashly upon a subject with which he was but imperfectly acquainted.'

a little dipped in the rebellion of the Commons;[1] and being brother-in-law to John of Ghant,[2] it was no wonder if he followed the fortunes of that family; and was well with Henry the Fourth when he had deposed his predecessor. Neither is it to be admired that Henry, who was a wise as well as a valiant prince, who claimed by succession, and was sensible that his title was not sound, but was rightfully in Mortimer, who had married the heir of York; it was not to be admired, I say, if that great politician should be pleased to have the greatest wit of those times in his interests, and to be the trumpet of his praises. Augustus had given him the example, by the advice of Mæcenas, who recommended Virgil and Horace to him; whose praises helped to make him popular while he was alive, and after his death have made him precious to posterity. As for the religion of our poet, he seems to have some little bias towards the opinions of Wickliff, after John of Ghant his patron; somewhat of which appears in the *Tale of Piers Plowman.*[3] Yet I cannot blame him for inveighing so sharply against the vices of the clergy in his age: their pride, their ambition, their pomp, their avarice, their worldly interest, deserved the lashes which he gave them, both in that, and in most of his *Canterbury Tales.* Neither has his contemporary Boccace spared them. Yet both those poets lived in much esteem with good and holy men in orders; for the scandal which is given by particular priests reflects not on the sacred function. Chaucer's Monk, his Canon, and his Friar, took not from the character of his Good Parson. A satirical poet is the check of the laymen on bad priests. We are only to take care that we involve not the innocent with the guilty in the same condemnation. The good cannot be too much honoured, nor the bad too coarsely used; for the corruption of the best becomes the worst.[4] When a clergyman is whipped, his

[1] From Speght who (on the assumption that Usk's *Testament of Love* was Chaucer's) claimed that Chaucer 'was in some trouble in the days of King Richard the Second, as it may appear in the *Testament of Love*: where he doth greatly complain of his own rashness in following the multitude, and of their hatred against him for bewraying their purpose.'

[2] Speght, again, is the source of this myth, and even confidently offers a genealogy or 'stemma' of Chaucer's family. The identity of Chaucer's wife is in fact mysterious.

[3] *The Plowman's Tale* was regarded as Chaucer's till Tyrwhitt, and is included in Speght's edition. Its authorship is unknown. There is no evidence that Chaucer was a follower of Wiclif.

[4] Cf. 'A Defence of *An Essay,*' vol. I, p. 118n., above.

gown is first taken off, by which the dignity of his order is secured. If he be wrongfully accused, he has his action of slander; and 'tis at the poet's peril if he transgress the law. But they will tell us that all kind of satire, though never so well deserved by particular priests, yet brings the whole order into contempt. Is then the peerage of England anything dishonoured when a peer suffers for his treason? If he be libelled, or any way defamed, he has his *scandalum magnatum* to punish the offender. They who use this kind of argument seem to be conscious to themselves of somewhat which has deserved the poet's lash, and are less concerned for their public capacity than for their private; at least there is pride at the bottom of their reasoning. If the faults of men in orders are only to be judged among themselves, they are all in some sort parties; for, since they say the honour of their order is concerned in every member of it, how can we be sure that they will be impartial judges? How far I may be allowed to speak my opinion in this case, I know not; but I am sure a dispute of this nature caused mischief in abundance betwixt a King of England and an Archbishop of Canterbury; one standing up for the laws of his land, and the other for the honour (as he called it) of God's Church; which ended in the murther of the prelate, and in the whipping of his Majesty from post to pillar for his penance.[1] The learned and ingenious Dr Drake[2] has saved me the labour of inquiring into the esteem and reverence which the priests have had of old; and I would rather extend than diminish any part of it: yet I must needs say that when a priest provokes me without any occasion given him, I have no reason, unless it be the charity of a Christian, to forgive him: *prior læsit*[3] is justification sufficient in the civil law. If I answer him in his own language, self-defence, I am sure, must be allowed me; and if I carry it farther, even to a sharp recrimination, somewhat may be indulged to human frailty. Yet my resentment has not wrought so far, but that I have followed Chaucer in his character of a holy man, and have enlarged on that subject with some pleasure, reserving to myself

[1] This reference to the murder of Thomas à Becket by the order of Henry II in 1170 is deliberately tactless, in view of William III's staunch Protestantism and his refusal to establish the Episcopacy in Scotland.

[2] James Drake (1667-1707), a Tory pamphleteer. His reply to Collier, *The Ancient and Modern Stages Surveyed* (1699), had just appeared.

[3] Terence, *Eunuchus*, prol. 6: 'self-defence.'

the right, if I shall think fit hereafter, to describe another sort of priests, such as are more easily to be found than the Good Parson; such as have given the last blow to Christianity in this age, by a practice so contrary to their doctrine. But this will keep cold till another time.

In the mean while, I take up Chaucer where I left him. He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature,[1] because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his *Canterbury Tales* the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole English nation in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta[2] could not have described their natures better than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are so suited to their different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity: their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding; such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous; some are unlearned, or (as Chaucer calls them) *lewd*, and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different: the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are several men, and distinguished from each other as much as the mincing Lady Prioress and the broad-speaking, gap-toothed Wife of Bath. But enough of this: there is such a variety of game[3] springing up before me that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. 'Tis sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty. We have our forefathers and great-grand-dames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days: their general characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of Monks, and Friars,

[1] This eulogy echoes that of Shakespeare put in Neander's mouth in the essay *Of Dramatic Poesy*, vol. I, p. 67, above.

[2] Giambattista della Porta (1540-1615), the immensely versatile Neapolitan physician. In his *De humana physiognomia* (1586), he had systematically examined the influence of emotions on the human face.

[3] Cf. preface to *The Rival Ladies*, vol. I, p. 8n., above.

and Canons, and Lady Abbesses, and Nuns; for mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of nature, though every thing is altered. May I have leave to do myself the justice (since my enemies will do me none, and are so far from granting me to be a good poet that they will not allow me so much as to be a Christian, or a moral man), may I have leave, I say, to inform my reader that I have confined my choice to such tales of Chaucer as savour nothing of immodesty. If I had desired more to please than to instruct, the Reeve, the Miller, the Shipman, the Merchant, the Sumner, and, above all, the Wife of Bath, in the Prologue to her Tale, would have procured me as many friends and readers as there are beaux and ladies of pleasure in the town. But I will no more offend against good manners: I am sensible as I ought to be of the scandal I have given by my loose writings;[1] and make what reparation I am able, by this public acknowledgment. If any thing of this nature, or of profaneness, be crept into these poems, I am so far from defending it that I disown it. *Totum hoc indictum volo.* Chaucer makes another manner of apology for his broad speaking, and Boccace makes the like; but I will follow neither of them. Our countryman, in the end of his characters before the *Canterbury Tales*, thus excuses the ribaldry, which is very gross in many of his novels:

But first, I pray you, of your courtesy,
That ye ne arrete it not my villany,
Though that I plainly speak in this mattere,
To tellen you her words, and eke her chere:
Ne though I speak her words properly,
For this ye knowen as well as I,
Who shall tellen a tale after a man,
He mote rehearse as nye as ever he can:
Everich word of it ben in his charge,
All speke he, never so rudely, ne large:
Or else he mote tellen his tale untrue,
Or feine things, or find words new:
He may not spare, altho he were his brother,
He mote as wel say o word as another.
Christ spake himself full broad in holy writ,
And well I wote no villany is it.

[1] This almost death-bed repentance is based upon no very grave offences against propriety—against none, at least, recently committed. Dryden does not figure largely in Collier's attack, though his *Amphytrion* (1690) is dishonourably mentioned there.

Eke *Plato* saith, who so can him rede,
The words mote been cousin to the dede.[1]

Yet if a man should have enquired of Boccace or of Chaucer what need they had of introducing such characters, where obscene words were proper in their mouths, but very undecent to be heard, I know not what answer they could have made: for that reason, such tales shall be left untold by me. You have here a specimen of Chaucer's language which is so obsolete that his sense is scarce to be understood; and you have likewise more than one example of his unequal numbers, which were mentioned before. Yet many of his verses consist of ten syllables, and the words not much behind our present English: as for example, these two lines in the description of the Carpenter's young wife:

Wincing she was, as is a jolly colt,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.[2]

I have almost done with Chaucer, when I have answered some objections relating to my present work. I find some people are offended that I have turned these tales into modern English; because they think them unworthy of my pains, and look on Chaucer as a dry, old-fashioned wit, not worth receiving. I have often heard the late Earl of Leicester[3] say that Mr Cowley himself was of that opinion; who, having read him over at my Lord's request, declared he had no taste of him. I dare not advance my opinion against the judgment of so great an author: but I think it fair, however, to leave the decision to the public. Mr Cowley was too modest to set up for a dictator; and being shocked perhaps with his old style, never examined into the depth of his good sense. Chaucer, I confess, is a rough diamond, and must first be polished ere he shines. I deny not likewise that, living in our early days of poetry, he writes not always of a piece; but sometimes mingles trivial things with those of greater moment. Sometimes also, though not often, he runs riot, like Ovid, and knows not when he has said enough. But there are more great wits, beside Chaucer, whose fault is their excess of conceits, and those ill sorted. An author is not to write all he

[1] Prologue, A.725-42. [2] Miller's Tale, A.3263-4.
[3] Philip Sidney (1619-98), third Earl of Leicester, to whom Dryden had dedicated *Don Sebastian* (1690). He had some reputation as a patron of literature after succeeding to his father's title in 1677.

can, but only all he ought. Having observed this redundancy in Chaucer (as it is an easy matter for a man of ordinary parts to find a fault in one of greater) I have not tied myself to a literal translation; but have often omitted what I judged unnecessary, or not of dignity enough to appear in the company of better thoughts. I have presumed farther in some places, and added somewhat of my own where I thought my author was deficient, and had not given his thoughts their true lustre, for want of words in the beginning of our language. And to this I was the more emboldened, because (if I may be permitted to say it of myself) I found I had a soul congenial to his, and that I had been conversant in the same studies. Another poet, in another age, may take the same liberty with my writings; if at least they live long enough to deserve correction. It was also necessary sometimes to restore the sense of Chaucer, which was lost or mangled in the errors of the press: let this example suffice at present; in the story of Palamon and Arcite where the Temple of Diana is described, you find these verses in all the editions of our author:

> There saw I *Danè* turned unto a tree,
> I mean not the goddess *Diane*,
> But *Venus* daughter, which that hight *Danè*.[1]

Which, after a little consideration, I knew was to be reformed into this sense, that *Daphne*, the daughter of Peneus, was turned into a tree. I durst not make thus bold with Ovid, lest some future Milbourne[2] should arise, and say I varied from my author because I understood him not.

But there are other judges who think I ought not to have translated Chaucer into English, out of a quite contrary notion: they suppose there is a certain veneration due to his old language;

[1] A.2062-4.

[2] Luke Milbourne (1649-1720), a High Church clergyman who had attacked the 1697 Virgil in *Notes on Dryden's Virgil* (1698). The young Alexander Pope took Dryden's part in this controversy in *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), ll. 458-63:

> Pride, malice, folly, against Dryden rose,
> In various shapes of parsons, critics, beaus;
> But sense surviv'd, when merry jests were past;
> For rising merit will buoy up at last.
> Might he return, and bless once more our eyes,
> New Blackmores and new Milbourns must arise.

and that it is little less than profanation and sacrilege to alter it. They are farther of opinion that somewhat of his good sense will suffer in this transfusion, and much of the beauty of his thoughts will infallibly be lost, which appear with more grace in their old habit. Of this opinion was that excellent person whom I mentioned, the late Earl of Leicester, who valued Chaucer as much as Mr Cowley despised him. My Lord dissuaded me from this attempt (for I was thinking of it some years before his death), and his authority prevailed so far with me as to defer my undertaking while he lived, in deference to him. Yet my reason was not convinced with what he urged against it. If the first end of a writer be to be understood, then, as his language grows obsolete, his thoughts must grow obscure:

> multa renascentur, quæ nunc cecidere; cadentque
> quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,
> quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.[1]

When an ancient word, for its sound and significancy, deserves to be revived, I have that reasonable veneration for antiquity to restore it. All beyond this is superstition. Words are not like landmarks, so sacred as never to be removed: customs are changed, and even statutes are silently repealed, when the reason ceases for which they were enacted. As for the other part of the argument, that his thoughts will lose of their original beauty by the innovation of words: in the first place, not only their beauty, but their being is lost, where they are no longer understood, which is the present case. I grant that something must be lost in all transfusion, that is, in all translations; but the sense will remain, which would otherwise be lost, or at least be maimed, when it is scarce intelligible, and that but to a few. How few are there who can read Chaucer so as to understand him perfectly? And if imperfectly, then with less profit, and no pleasure. 'Tis not for the use of some old Saxon friends[2] that I have taken these pains with him: let them neglect my version, because they have

[1] Horace, *Ars poetica*, ll. 70–2: 'Many things that have decayed will revive, and words now held in honour will fall into disuse if usage so wills it, usage to which belong the rule and law and standard of all speech.'

[2] There is no direct evidence that any of the Anglo-Saxon scholars of the day were friends of Dryden. But the age was rich in such scholars, especially at Oxford: George Hickes's grammar of the language had appeared in 1689, Edmund Gibson's edition of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in 1692, and Edward Thwaites's edition of the Heptateuch in 1698.

no need of it. I made it for their sakes who understand sense and poetry as well as they, when that poetry and sense is put into words which they understand. I will go farther, and dare to add that what beauties I lose in some places, I give to others which had them not originally: but in this I may be partial to myself; let the reader judge, and I submit to his decision. Yet I think I have just occasion to complain of them who, because they understand Chaucer, would deprive the greater part of their countrymen of the same advantage, and hoard him up, as misers do their grandam gold,[1] only to look on it themselves, and hinder others from making use of it. In sum, I seriously protest that no man ever had, or can have, a greater veneration for Chaucer than myself. I have translated some part of his works only that I might perpetuate his memory, or at least refresh it, amongst my countrymen. If I have altered him anywhere for the better, I must at the same time acknowledge that I could have done nothing without him: *facile est inventis addere*[2] is no great commendation; and I am not so vain to think I have deserved a greater. I will conclude what I have to say of him singly, with this one remark: a lady of my acquaintance, who keeps a kind of correspondence with some authors of the fair sex in France, has been informed by them that Mademoiselle de Scudéry, who is as old as Sibyl, and inspired like her by the same god of poetry, is at this time translating Chaucer into modern French.[3] From which I gather that he has been formerly translated into the old Provençal; for how she should come to understand old English, I know not. But the matter of fact being true, it makes me think that there is something in it like fatality; that, after certain periods of time, the fame and memory of great wits should be renewed, as Chaucer is both in France and England. If this be wholly chance, 'tis extraordinary; and I dare not call it more, for fear of being taxed with superstition.

Boccace comes last to be considered who, living in the same age with Chaucer, had the same genius, and followed the same studies. Both writ novels, and each of them cultivated his mother tongue. But the greatest resemblance of our two modern authors being in their familiar style, and pleasing way of relating comical

[1] I.e. hoarded treasure; cf. *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), III.149.
[2] 'It is easy adding to what has already been discovered.'
[3] Madeleine de Scudéry (1607-1701) was already over ninety, and there is no other record of her translation of Chaucer.

adventures, I may pass it over, because I have translated nothing from Boccace of that nature. In the serious part of poetry, the advantage is wholly on Chaucer's side; for though the Englishman has borrowed many tales from the Italian, yet it appears that those of Boccace were not generally of his own making, but taken from authors of former ages, and by him only modelled; so that what there was of invention, in either of them, may be judged equal. But Chaucer has refined on Boccace and has mended the stories which he has borrowed in his way of telling; though prose allows more liberty of thought, and the expression is more easy when unconfined by numbers. Our countryman carries weight, and yet wins the race at disadvantage. I desire not the reader should take my word; and therefore I will set two of their discourses on the same subject in the same light, for every man to judge betwixt them. I translated Chaucer first, and amongst the rest pitched on *The Wife of Bath's Tale*; not daring, as I have said, to adventure on her Prologue, because 'tis too licentious. There Chaucer introduces an old woman of mean parentage, whom a youthful knight of noble blood was forced to marry, and consequently loathed her. The crone being in bed with him on the wedding-night, and finding his aversion, endeavours to win his affection by reason, and speaks a good word for herself, (as who could blame her?) in hope to mollify the sullen bridegroom. She takes her topics from the benefits of poverty, the advantages of old age and ugliness, the vanity of youth, and the silly pride of ancestry and titles without inherent virtue, which is the true nobility. When I had closed Chaucer, I returned to Ovid, and translated some more of his fables; and by this time had so far forgotten *The Wife of Bath's Tale* that when I took up Boccace, unawares I fell on the same argument of preferring virtue to nobility of blood and titles, in the story of Sigismonda; which I had certainly avoided, for the resemblance of the two discourses, if my memory had not failed me. Let the reader weigh them both; and if he thinks me partial to Chaucer, 'tis in him to right Boccace.

I prefer in our countryman, far above all his other stories, the noble poem of *Palamon and Arcite*, which is of the epic kind, and perhaps not much inferior to the *Ilias* or the *Æneis*: the story is more pleasing than either of them, the manners as

perfect, the diction as poetical, the learning as deep and various, and the disposition full as artful: only it includes a greater length of time, as taking up seven years at least; but Aristotle has left undecided the duration of the action; which yet is easily reduced into the compass of a year, by a narration of what preceded the return of Palamon to Athens. I had thought, for the honour of our narration, and more particularly for his, whose laurel, tho' unworthy, I have worn after him, that this story was of English growth, and Chaucer's own: but I was undeceived by Boccace; for, casually looking on the end of his seventh *Giornata*, I found Dioneo, (under which name he shadows himself) and Fiametta (who represents his mistress, the natural daughter of Robert, King of Naples), of whom these words are spoken: *Dioneo e Fiametta gran pezza cantarono insieme d'Arcita, e di Palemone*;[1] by which it appears that this story was written before the time of Boccace; but the name of its author being wholly lost, Chaucer is now become an original; and I question not but the poem has received many beauties by passing through his noble hands. Besides this tale, there is another of his own invention, after the manner of the Provençals, called *The Flower and the Leaf*;[2] with which I was so particularly pleased, both for the invention and the moral, that I cannot hinder myself from recommending it to the reader.

As a corollary to this preface, in which I have done justice to others, I owe somewhat to myself: not that I think it worth my time to enter the lists with one M——, or one B——,[3] but barely to take notice that such men there are, who have written scurrilously against me without any provocation. M——, who is in orders, pretends, amongst the rest, this quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul on priesthood. If I have, I am only to ask pardon of good priests, and am afraid his part of the reparation will come to little. Let him be satisfied that he shall not be able to force himself upon me for an adversary. I contemn him too much to enter into competition with him. His own translations of

[1] *Decamerone*, VII.x (epilogue): 'Dioneo and Fiametta together told a long tale of Arcita and Palemone.' Cf. p. 277n., above.

[2] *The Flower and the Leaf*, now regarded as a fifteenth-century poem of uncertain authorship, was included by Speght and other earlier editors as Chaucer's.

[3] Luke Milbourne and Sir Richard Blackmore; cf. pp. 287n., 262n., above.

Virgil[1] have answered his criticisms on mine. If (as they say he has declared in print), he prefers the version of Ogilby[2] to mine, the world has made him the same compliment: for 'tis agreed on all hands that he writes even below Ogilby. That, you will say, is not easily to be done; but what cannot M—— bring about? I am satisfied, however, that, while he and I live together, I shall not be thought the worst poet of the age. It looks as if I had desired him underhand to write so ill against me; but upon my honest word I have not bribed him to do me this service, and am wholly guiltless of his pamphlet. 'Tis true I should be glad if I could persuade him to continue his good offices, and write such another critique on anything of mine; for I find, by experience, he has a great stroke with the reader, when he condemns any of my poems, to make the world have a better opinion of them. He has taken some pains with my poetry; but nobody will be persuaded to take the same with his. If I had taken to the Church (as he affirms, but which was never in my thoughts), I should have had more sense, if not more grace, than to have turned myself out of my benefice by writing libels on my parishioners. But his account of my manners and my principles are of a piece with his cavils and his poetry; and so I have done with him for ever.

As for the City Bard, or Knight Physician,[3] I hear his quarrel to me is that I was the author of *Absalom and Achitophel*, which he thinks is a little hard on his fanatic patrons in London.

But I will deal the more civilly with his two poems, because nothing ill is to be spoken of the dead: and therefore peace be to the Manes of his *Arthurs*.[4] I will only say that it was not for

[1] Milbourne's version of the first book of the *Aeneid* had appeared in 1687, just before the Revolution. In his preface he offers as one reason for his translation an ambition 'to make a trial upon that which Mr Dryden represents as so difficult, if not a wholly impossible task'—probably a reference to Dryden's preface to *Sylvæ* (1685), p. 24, above, where Dryden speaks of Virgil's 'inimitable grace' and 'diction . . . never to be copied.'

[2] John Ogilby (1600-76), a Scot who had translated Virgil in 1649, the *Iliad* in 1660, and the *Odyssey* in 1665. His revised Virgil of 1654, issued as a handsome folio with plates dedicated to individual sponsors, may have served Dryden as a model. Some lines of Ogilby's passed almost verbatim into Dryden's version by way of Lauderdale's. Cf. preface to *Sylvæ*, p. 20, above and Proudfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 234n., ch. VI.

[3] Sir Richard Blackmore (1653-1729) had been knighted by William III, and appointed his Court Physician in 1697. Cf. 'Postscript' to the *Aeneis*, p. 262n., above.

[4] Blackmore, *Prince Arthur* (1695), *King Arthur* (1697).

this noble Knight that I drew the plan of an epic poem on King Arthur in my preface to the translation of Juvenal.[1] The Guardian Angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage; and therefore he rejected them, as Dares did the whirl-bats of Eryx when they were thrown before him by Entellus.[2] Yet from the preface he plainly took his hint; for he began immediately upon the story, though he had the baseness not to acknowledge his benefactor, but instead of it to traduce me in a libel.

I shall say the less of Mr Collier, because in many things he has taxed me justly; and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expressions of mine which can be truly argued of obscenity, profaneness, or immorality, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance. It becomes me not to draw my pen in the defence of a bad cause, when I have so often drawn it for a good one. Yet it were not difficult to prove that in many places he has perverted my meaning by his glosses, and interpreted my words into blasphemy and bawdry of which they were not guilty. Besides that, he is too much given to horse-play in his raillery, and comes to battle like a dictator from the plough. I will not say, *The zeal of God's house has eaten him up*;[3] but I am sure it has devoured some part of his good manners and civility. It might also be doubted whether it were altogether zeal which prompted him to this rough manner of proceeding; perhaps it became not one of his function to rake into the rubbish of ancient and modern plays; a divine might have employed his pains to better purpose than in the nastiness of Plautus and Aristophanes, whose examples, as they excuse not me, so it might be possibly supposed that he read them not without some pleasure. They who have written commentaries on those poets, or on Horace, Juvenal, and Martial, have explained some vices which, without their interpretation, had been unknown to modern times.

Neither has he judged impartially betwixt the former age and us. There is more bawdry in one play of Fletcher's, called *The Custom of the Country*, than in all ours together. Yet this has been often acted on the stage in my remembrance. Are the

[1] Cf. pp. 91-2, above. [2] *Aeneid*, V.400. [3] Psalms 69.9; John 2.17

times much so more reformed now than they were five-and-twenty years ago? If they are, I congratulate the amendment of our morals. But I am not to prejudice the cause of my fellow-poets, though I abandon my own defence: they have some of them answered for themselves; and neither they nor I can think Mr Collier so formidable an enemy that we should shun him. He has lost ground at the latter end of the day by pursuing his point too far, like the Prince of Condé at the battle of Senneph:[1] from immoral plays to no plays, *ab abusu ad usum, non valet consequentia.*[2] But, being a party, I am not to erect myself into a judge. As for the rest of those who have written against me, they are such scoundrels that they deserve not the least notice to be taken of them. B—— and M—— are only distinguished from the crowd by being remembered to their infamy:

Demetri, teque, Tigelli,
discipularum inter jubeo plorare cathedras.[3]

[1] Senef in Flanders where, on 11 August 1674, the Prince of Condé suffered heavy losses by advancing too fast and too far towards the retreating forces of the Prince of Orange.

[2] A logician's tag: 'abuses need not lead to proper uses.'

[3] Horace, *Satires*, I.x.90-1: 'I order you, Demetrius and Tigellus, go and whine where your female pupils sit.'

GLOSSARY OF LITERARY TERMS

THIS GLOSSARY lists Dryden's more significant uses of literary terms, with as much explanation as they seem to require—sometimes they require none—followed by page-references to this edition.

Sources.

Dryden's literary terms have four kinds of origin:

1. There are the remains of the vast classical inheritance of Renaissance England, already in decay when Dryden was born, and largely based on the *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* of Aristotle, the *Ars poetica* of Horace—by far the most quoted of all Dryden's critical sources, but also the least original—the *Ad Herennium* then attributed to Cicero and the *De oratore* which was certainly his, and the *Institutio oratoria* of Quintilian. A large proportion of classical terms reached Dryden, and the Elizabethans before him, by way of Italian and French intermediaries, to an extent which must forever remain difficult to determine. Dryden's classical debt, though great, was strikingly smaller than that of Elizabethan critics like Fraunce and Puttenham (or whoever wrote the *Art of English Poesy* of 1589); in this sense he stands near the end of a tradition, at a point where the English were either adopting English terms in place of classical ones or, more commonly, where they were abandoning terms altogether in favour of a less technical mode of criticism.

2. There is a smaller number of terms more recently adopted, often by Dryden himself, from Italian and French sources and without known classical precedents, e.g. the *continuity of scenes*; and here the most significant source by far is Corneille.

3. There is a purely English inheritance of such terms as *wit*, some of which are sensibly altered in meaning by Dryden's use.

4. Dryden coined a number of literary terms, and a higher proportion of his coinages have survived than in the case of Puttenham, the most ambitious inventer of literary terms in English. Dryden, indeed, is our most successful coiner, especially if we include terms which, like *criticism* itself, he first adapted to a literary use; and it is largely through his example that English made a transition, in the century between the death of Elizabeth I and the birth of Samuel Johnson, from a provincial dependence on continental sources to the aesthetic leadership of Europe in the eighteenth century.

Accent: stress in verse, I.83 (contrasted with Latin 'quantity'). Puttenham (II.iii) calls stress 'sharp accent.'

Accident: event (in plot), I.64, 116, 155, 251; II.49; cf. *Religio laici* (1682), ll.29-30:

> One thought *content* the good to be enjoy'd;
> This every little accident destroy'd.

Act: five-fold division of play (Latin *actus*—cf. Horace, *Ars poetica*, ll.189-90), I.29, 37; cf. Shakespeare and Fletcher, *Henry VIII*, epilogue l.3; Johnson defines it in *Rambler* no. 156 ('proceeds in an unbroken tenor') in a manner which suggests French dramatic usage rather than English.

Action: the total plot, as in 'unity of action,' I.29, 33 (its four parts), 95; cf. Jonson, *Timber*, where it refers both to the event imitated by the dramatist, and ultimately to the plot: 'The fable is called the imitation of one entire and perfect action . . .' (*Spingarn*, I.60)—a reference to Aristotle, *Poetics*, ch. vi (πρᾶξις).

Actor: character in play, I.35, 55. For the modern sense, Dryden commonly uses 'player,' I.52n; but cf. I.278.

Admiration: see catharsis, *below*.

Affection: emotion (of any kind), I.211.

Alexandrine: a line of six feet, 'hexameter' (usually French), I.65 & n., 96; II.32 (defined), 237; once applied to Spenser, II.238 ('which we call, though improperly, the Pindaric').

Allegory, allegorical: II.4, 257.

Anglicism: an unassimilated borrowing?, I.239n.

Antithesis: a figure of opposition, I.22, 98.

Apology: justification, I.166—a term that might, in this sense, describe many of Dryden's prefaces, though he rarely uses it.

Apostrophe: an exclamatory address, II.55.

Argument: an outline of plot, I.9. The more modern sense of 'contention' is also found, II.26, but elsewhere Dryden uses 'argumentation' for this purpose, I.9; II.25.
Aria: see songish part, *below.*
Art: conscious contrivance in a poet, I.69, 74, 79, 135; II.30.
Artificial, inartificial: (in)artistic, I.37. The former is always a term of commendation; though Dryden is also aware of a neutral sense (=man-made), e.g. 'Sigismonda and Guiscardo,' l. 213. There is also the special usage, derived directly from Corneille's third *Discours*, of the 'artificial day,' I.70, i.e., a day of twelve hours (*see* natural, *below*).
Artifice: poetic contrivance, I.75. Corneille uses the word in the same commendatory sense, I.131n.

Balette: ballet, I.62 & n.—the first recorded use in English.
Biographer: II.208.
Biography: II.8 & n.—the first recorded use in English.
Blank verse: unrhyming iambic pentameters, I.6 & n., 7, 8, 79 (defined), 83 ('measured prose'), 84 ('a poetic prose') & n.; II.240; 22 (of Italian). An Elizabethan term—cf. *Hamlet*, II.ii.339.
Bombast: an excess of style characteristic of serious poetry (epic, tragedy), I.67, 199, 258 278.
Break: to break scenes, i.e. to clear the stage between scenes (in violation of Corneille's *liaison de scènes*), I.64, 95 ('broken action,' of *Annus Mirabilis*); II.49. Corneille's term is once translated 'connection of scenes,' I. 240 & n., and several times 'continuity of scenes,' I.29, 37, 71. *See* unbroken scenes, *below.*
Breaking: caesura, II.24 & n.
Burlesque: (1) parody, I.101, 205 (verb).
(2) rhyming octasyllabics, II.103 & n., 147, 148 & n.—the metre proper to parody, as in Butler's *Hudibras* (1663-78).
Cf. epilogue to *Indian Emperor* (1667), l. 15.
Business: dramatic action, I.30, 37, 47, 75.
Buskin: high, thick-soled boot, the mark of Latin tragedy (*cothurnus*—cf. Horace, *Ars poetica*, l. 80), as the *soccus* ('sock') was of comedy, I.38 & n. Cf. *Mac Flecknoe* (1682), ll. 79-80:

Great Fletcher never treads in buskins here,
Nor greater Jonson dares in socks appear.

By-concernment: under-plot, I.59, 76, 234. *See* concernment, walk, *below.*

Cadence: fall, *hence* (Italian) rhythmical fall of voice, *hence* rhythm (cf. Chaucer, *Hous de Fame*, l. 627), I.40, 82, II.15, 164, 203; also 'cadency,' I.89; II.32.
Caesura: elision, II.235 & n., 236—an unparalleled usage. *See* breaking, *above.*
Catachresis: misuse of word or figure, 'Clevelandism', I.21 & n., 39, 201, 257. Puttenham calls it the figure of 'plain abuse' (III. xvii).
Catastasis: later dramatic development, 'counterturn', I.33 & n. First recorded in 1656; the word was unused in classical times as a literary term.
Catastrophe: dénouement, the resolution of a play, 'conclusion,' 'discovery,' 'event,' 'success,' 'unravelling,' 'untying,' I.33, 216.
Catharsis: the term is never used by Dryden, though he twice borrows Aristotle's medical analogy of the purge in *Poetics*, ch.xiii, I.245; II.228. References to 'pity and terror' (sometimes 'admiration,' as in Sidney's *Apology* (1595), sometimes 'compassion') are abundant, I.41, 46 & n., 211, 212, 213, 216, 217 & n., 218, 219, 243, 245, 246, 247 (to distinguish Shakespeare and Fletcher), 250; II.167, 227. Dryden commonly interprets Aristotle to mean that tragedy gives rise to pity and terror ('raise,' 'produce'), occasionally takes the medical analogy more literally, and occasionally attempts a compromise, II.199, 227 ('to expel arrogance, and introduce compassion').
Censor, censure: a negative critic(ism), I.68, 106, 109, 131.
Character: dramatic individual, 'person,' I.9, 61, 249-50 (defined); *also* personal quality, I.33, 35
Chime: coincidence of lines, I.84, 108 (in extended use).
Chorus: Greek dramatic chorus, I.33, 36, 63n., 66, 234; II.103, 161, 199.
Clench: pun, I.21, 67, 179; II.139.
Clevelandism: I.21 & n. *See* catachresis, *above.*
Coinage, coining: of words, I.39; II.84.
Colour: figure of speech (often plural), in the most general sense, I.98, 120; II.207; cf. Horace, *Ars poetica*, l. 86. Hobbes (*Spingarn*, II.63) uses the word in the sense of 'style,' 'stylishness.' ('That which giveth a poem the true and natural colour . . .'); cf. colouring,

II.186, 242; as third part of poetry and painting (invention, design, colouring), II.203, 208, 275.

Conceit: originally an imagined thing, *hence* thought, e.g. Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, I.692; Jonson, II.279 & n.; in Dryden usually disparaging, as of a poetic thought which is far-fetched, 'thin,' obscure, etc., I.22, 65, 72, 178, 182; II.82, 243, 280; cf. Davenant, 'what are commonly called conceits, things that sound like the knacks or toys of ordinary epigrammatists,' and Hobbes, who calls them 'strong lines' (*Spingarn*, pp. 22, 63), i.e. metaphysical conceits. Cf. Dryden's *Persius*, I.241: 'This mean conceit, this darling mystery.'

Concernment: interest, pity (especially in tragedy), I.41, 42, 47, 60. *See* by-concernment, *above*.

Conclusion: I.2; II.207. *See* catastrophe, *above*.

Conduct: Plan, structure, 'design' (of a play), I.33, 50, 211 (= Aristotle's μῦθος); II.49, 161.

Connection of epithets: compound adjectives, I.206.

Connections of scenes: I.240 & n. *See* break, *above*.

Contexture: style?, I.105; II.10. Cf. Davenant and Hobbes (*Spingarn*, II.18, 69).

Continuity of scenes: I.29, 37, 71. *See* break, *above*.

Correct(ion): of the observance of the Aristotelian rules, I.70, 140, 175, 176; I.94, 103, 135; cf. uncorrectness, I.132. The former are usually terms of praise, but used disparagingly during the Longinian phase, I. 197.

Counterturn: dramatic development, I.33 & n., 65; cf. Davenant (*Spingarn*, II.18). *See* catastasis, *above*.

Couplet: a rhyming pair, usually iambic pentameters, I.8, 84, 90, 95; II.248; cf. Davenant, I.96n. *See* heroic verse, *below*.

Critic: (1) fault-finder, I.100, 109, 167, 173, 205 (and 'laugher'). *See* censor, *above*.
(2) in modern, neutral sense, I.119, 143; II.177, 257, 261. Cf. hypercritic, I.198; II.158.

Criticism: judgment in general (often adverse), I.31, 147; *hence* literary judgment, I.196 & n. (first recorded use), 197; II.213, 237. In plural (=critiques), II.292.

Critique: I.211 & n. 218; II.84, 160n., 174, 292.

Dactyl: a foot of three syllables, the first stressed, I.95; II.154.

Dark: obscure, I.271.

Decorum: literary propriety, I.56, 63; II.219; cf. Aristotle, II.211n.; cf. decent, II.196. *See* indecorum, *and* wit (4), *below*.

Delight (*or* pleasure) *and* instruction: as purpose of poetry, I.38, 113-4, 116, 120, 152 & n., 199, 219, 245; II.27-8, 153. Cf. Horace, *Ars poetica*, l. 333.

Design: action, 'conduct', I.33, 59, 61, 65; II.161, 162, 223, 224; as second part of poetry and painting (invention, design, colouring), II.208; translation of Aristotle's μῦθος, I.211; idea for plot, the poet's purpose, II.84; cf. to design, II.275.

Dialogue: (1) dramatic conversation, I.78, 79, 99.
(2) as literary form (e.g. *Of Dramatic Poesy*), I.123; II.211, 212 (on the 'several kinds').

Diction: style, usually poetic, II.24, 31 & n., 153, 214, 248, 275 (defined as 'the choice of words, and harmony of numbers'). Dryden writes as if the term were not established in English, II.31, but it was used in this sense at least as early as Sidney's *Apology* (1595), II.31n.

Diego: comic servant, from Tuke's *Adventures of Five Hours* (1663), I.57 & n., 65.

Discourse: argument, conversation, I.9, 16; cf. discoursive, I.8, 87.

Discovery: I.33, 76; cf. II.207. *See* catastrophe, *above*.

Disposition: II.5, 195f., 242, 275, 280. *dispositio* is the second of Quintilian's 'five parts of oratory' (III.iii). It is usually indistinguishable from 'design' (see above), but in II.280 the terms seem to be distinguished, 'design' perhaps meaning 'the poet's purpose' here, and 'disposition' the arrangement or ordering of the invention.

Dissyllable: a metrical foot of two syllables, I.83.

Distich: rhyming couplet, I.7.

Divertise(ment): entertain(ment), I.107, 131, 152, Cf. Pepys, *Diary*, 7 January 1667.

Doggerel: bad verse, II.78.

Drive: to work, mould material, of a poet, I.29, 98 & n. (not in *OED*).

Elision: *See* synalaepha, *below*.

Elocution: style, 'expression,' I.97, 98, 154, 203; II.10, 153. *elocutio* is the third of Quintilian's 'five parts' (*see* disposition, *above*). The usual Renaissance term for modern 'elocution' (i.e. speech, delivery) was 'pronunciation.'

English: to translate into English, II.27.

Enthusiastic: of the divine, of religious belief, *hence* ecstatic, I.160; cf. enthusiasm, I.203. Cf. *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), ll. 529-30:

A numerous host of dreaming saints succeed
Of the true old enthusiastic breed.

Cf. George Williamson, 'The Restoration Revolt against Enthusiasm,' in his *Seventeenth-Century Contexts* (1960).

Entrance: first, explanatory section of a play, 'protasis,' I.33, 34.

Epic: 'heroic poem,' 'epopee,' I.95, 104; II.84, 223f., 238, 275. Strictly an adjective ('epic poem'), the term was not fully established in Dryden's day, and the first clear use of it as a noun is in Soame's translation of Boileau's *Art of Poetry* (1683), which Dryden revised, where 'The Epic' is the heading that precedes ll. 587f. Dryden may have introduced its use here as a noun, but he uses 'heroic poem' far more often in his own criticism.

Epigram: I.98, 160; II.82, 243.

Episode: minor part of the plot of a play (later of epic), 'by-concernment,' 'under-plot,' I.215, 216, 222, 233; II.92, 96, 161; in epics, II.224, 242, 275.

Epitasis: earlier dramatic development (following protasis), 'working up' of plot, I.33.

Epopee: 'heroic poem,' 'epic,' II.229, 232, 233.

Essay: an attempt, *hence* a brief prose sketch (from Montaigne's *Essais* of 1580, imitated by Bacon in his *Essays* of 1597), I.10 (as subtitle), 123 & n.; II.15, 74, 207. Dryden openly exploits the ambiguity of the term.

Ethical: I.120 ('poetry must be ethical').

Event: II.84—an unparalleled usage. *See* catastrophe, *above.*

Examen: a critical analysis, I.66 & n., 133—from Corneille's *Théâtre* (1660), cf. I.vii-viii.

Example: v. precept, II.8, 129, 215, 224.

Explicate: to explain (a poem), II.120.

Expression: style, 'elocution,' I.98. Dryden once uses the word, I.223, in the sense of 'euphemism' ('a modest clothing of our thoughts').

Fable: a story, fiction, II.262 & n., 273; cf. title *Fables* (1700), and Marvell, I.207n.; *hence* plot, I.207, 211, 215, 248.

Fabric: structure, body (of a poem), I.105, 215, 222, 248; II.43. The metaphor, which was a favourite of Davenant's—he calls *Gondibert* 'this new building,' and later in his preface extends the analogy to its 'furniture' (*Spingarn,* II.1, 2), i.e. to its style—is architectural; cf. *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), on the Fire of London:

Nor could thy fabric, Paul's, defend thee long.

Dryden also uses 'building' in similar contexts, II.224, 279, and exploits the analogy, II.269-70 ('Tis with a poet as with a man who designs to build . . .')

Fancy: the faculty that decorates the poet's first invention by appeal to the memory, 'imagination' (not commonly distinguished by Dryden); usually opposed to 'judgment', as being wilful and lawless, I.2, 3, 8 & n., 22, 66, 74, 78, 80, 91; Dryden once talks of 'fancy' as the second part of 'imagination,' I.98 & n. (invention, fancy, elocution); *hence* taste, liking, I.109; cf. fanciful, I.254.

Farce: the merely laughable, I.45; *hence* plays in which this predominates, I.119 (quoted from Sir Robert Howard, the earliest recorded use in this sense), 145-6, 145n., 244; II.103, 106, 109. In the Parallel Dryden compares it to grotesque painting, II.190 ('a farce is that in poetry which grotesque is in a picture').

Fescennine: 'a gross and rustic kind of raillery' in ancient satire, 'Saturnian', II.106f.

Fiction: a poetic invention (narrative or other), I.46, 47, 51, 204; II.48, 186-7 (compared with painting).

Figure: any non-literal turn of speech, I.146, 200, 203, 206, 207, 239, 278; II.275. A more general term than 'trope'; Quintilian, who inherited a vague and complicated usage, defines *figura* (IX.i) as any form of expression or, more specifically, any rational change from literal expression; the latter are of two kinds: first, figures of thought; and second, figures of speech. Cf. figurative, I.99, 259; II.21, 35, 143, 246, 248, 250. Dryden once appears to use 'figure' as 'grammatical inflection,' I.95. *See* colour, *above, and* trope, below.

Filler: a word used to fill up a line, II.255.

Fond: fund, II.30 (of imagery), II.40 (of ideas).

Foot: metrical unit, I.83; II.147, 237, 238.

Fustian: extravagantly figurative writing, I.277; II.183, 229, 243 (*v.* 'the true sublime').

Genius: the poet's inborn gift, I.224, 231, 254, 272; II.74, 136, 170, 178, 194.

Golden verse: 'two substantives and two adjectives with a verb betwixt them,' II.22 & n. (an unparalleled usage).

Grace: an indefinable excellence in poetry, I.57, 155; II.76, 246; cf. Horace's *curiosa felicitas* (Petronius), II.31, 206; Quintilian, IX. iv. 117; Boileau, *Art poétique*, IV. 78; Pope,

Essay on Criticism, l. 144; Samuel H. Monk, 'A Grace beyond the Reach of Art,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, v (1944).

Great (of poetic style): sublime, I.67, 277.

Grecism: Homeric turn of language (of Milton's verse), II.84, 150.

Grecize: to use a Greek form (of Terence), II.253n.

Hard: violent, far-fetched (of metaphors), I.200; II.121, 125.

Hemistich: half-verse, I.82, 84; II.205, 248 & n., 249.

Hero: chief male character, I.172 & n. (first recorded use), 191, 222, 224, 233, 246, 250; II.83, 96, 186, 199, 244, 228. The older primary sense, 'a person of heroic virtue, real or fictional,' co-exists easily with Dryden's literary usage in an age which believed in the epic and tragedy as morally edifying, and there are several borderline cases, e.g. II.96. Cf. Addison, II.233n.

Heroic: of the (largely Stoic) virtues proper to c17 epic and tragedy (cf. St Evremond, I.xiii), I.94, 104; cf. heroic play, I.138, 156, 158, 162; heroic poem, *see* epic, *above*; heroic verse, i.e. rhyming iambic pentameters, heroic couplets, I.156; II.23, 32, 61, 147 ('verse of ten syllables'), 153, 238, 247, 281. Cf. Milton, II.84n.

Heroine: chief female character, I.266 & n.

Hexameter: line of six feet, especially Latin and French, 'alexandrine,' I.84; II.23, 110, 113, 153.

Historical: of a poem, I.95 (*Annus Mirabilis*), where it is distinguished from 'epic,' 'since the action is not properly one,' although it is 'heroic' still. But Davenant calls *Gondibert* 'an historical poem' (*Spingarn*, II.19) without appearing to make this distinction.

Humour: (1) temperament of a person, real or fictional, I.116, 279; usually comic, I.2, 4.
(2) *hence* a character based upon a single temperament, 56 (comic), 71-3 (defined), 249; in farce, I.71, 85, 146.
(3) *hence* the comic sense (a Restoration usage, and by c18 the commonest), I.57, 67 & n., 147 & n., 152.
(1) and (2) are merely the general and specifically literary aspects of the same primary sense. (3) makes its way against them during the c17, and rapidly usurps the whole function of the word, a conflict clearly visible in the criticism of Dryden, who tries to conserve (1) and (2), I.71-3, in the old Jonsonian sense. Cf. Shadwell, *Spingarn*, II.150.

Hyperbaton, pl. hyperbata: the rhetorical figure of transportation, I.303 & n., 276. Cf. Longinus, ch.xxii. Puttenham (III.xiii) calls it the 'trespasser' figure, or 'disorder'.

Hyperbole: the rhetorical figure of exaggeration, I.200, 201, 202. Cf. Longinus, ch.xxxviii. Puttenham (III.xviii) calls it 'the lying figure' or 'overreacher'. Cf. Cowley, I.202n.

Iambic: a foot of two syllables, the second stressed, I.79, 83; II.110, 113.

Idea: Dryden once seems to use the word, in a discussion of the creative act, in the Platonic sense of 'ideal form,' I.98 ('the species or ideas of . . . things').

Idiom: characteristic turn of speech, especially in comparing one language with another, I.100, 175, 239n., 246.

Image: (1) an impression made, or left, by a sensation on the mind, I.2, 47, 67, 71(?), 272; cf. 'To Mrs Anne Killigrew: an Ode' (1686), ll. 16-7:

Her pencil drew whate'er her soul design'd,
And oft the happy draught surpass'd the image in her mind.

and *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), ll. 211-2:

Their valour works like bodies on a glass,
And does its image on their men project.

(2) *hence* model, ideal, example, I.33 (where Aristotle 'delivered to us the image of a play') 101, 139, 163, 191, 204n., 205; cf. Hobbes, who claimed that the object of the epic was 'to exhibit a venerable and amiable image of heroic virtue' (*Spingarn*, II.60).
(3) *hence* a trope, a rhetorical analogy, I.100, 101, 174, 202, 257; II.46; cf. Hobbes: 'an image is always a part, or rather the ground, of a poetical comparison' (*Spingarn*, II.71).
(4) Dryden sometimes appears to use the word, perhaps as an extension of (2), to mean whole poems, I.4, 25 (Lisideius's definition of a play as 'a just and lively image of human nature . . .'), 32, 87.
Also 'to image', as in (2) and (3) above, I.42, 98, 203, 204.

Imagination: (1) the faculty that stores, and uses, images (*see* image (I), *above*), the memory in its creative aspect, 'fancy': I.8, 22, 62, 64, 80, 91, 126. Cf. 'The Cock and the Fox' (1700), ll. 488-90:

On Chanticleer his wicked fancy bent;
And in his high imagination cast
By stratagem to gratify his taste.

Also in plural, I.135.

Imagination—cont.
(2) Dryden once uses the word, in a way which foreshadows Coleridge, to describe the creative act, I.98, and as a synonym of 'wit,' being composed of 'invention,' 'fancy,' and 'elocution'—a usage without parallel in Dryden and without clear parallel elsewhere in neoclassical criticism. Cf. John M. Aden, 'Dryden and the Imagination: the First Phase,' *PMLA*, lxxiv (1959), where he shows (p. 30n.) that, while Dryden prefers the synonym 'fancy,' like his contemporaries, he probably uses 'imagination' with unusual frequency, or more than half as often. But 'wit' occurs in the critical texts more often than 'fancy' and 'imagination' put together.

Imitation: (1) Aristotle's μίμησις, a representation of nature by means of art, I.35, 78, 114, 178, II.193, 194.
(2) a loose translation, I.262, 268 (defined), 270f.; II.152, 262 (of Cowley). Cf. Pope's title, *Imitations of Horace* (1738). *See* metaphrase, paraphrase, *below*.

Indecorum: literary impropriety, I.88, 107. *See* decorum, *above*.

Instruction: See delight, *above*.

Intrigue: a complication of plot, I.2, 65, 70.

Invention: the poet's discovery of his matter, I.98, 135; II.16 (*v.* translation), 194 & n., 275, 291. *inventio* is the first of Quintilian's 'five parts' (*see* disposition, *above*). Cf. M. W. Bundy, '"Invention" and "imagination" in the Renaissance,' *Journal of English & Germanic Philology*, xxix (1930).

Invective (adj.): of abusive poems, where satire is personal, II.116.

Irony: a refined form of satire, II.211 (of Lucian)—very rare in Dryden. Puttenham (III.xviii) calls it 'the dry mock.'

Judgment: an intellectual control by the poet and critic, especially over the 'fancy,' in favour of 'decorum', I.2, 3, 8 & n., 9, 80, 91, 98, 148, 201; II.29, 61, 280 (of Cowley). As Dryden ages, his concept of judgment grows less strict: cf. II.29, 'true judgment in poetry . . . takes a view of the whole together . . .'

Kind: literary *genre*, I.15, 38. There are no clear examples recorded before Dryden, but few instances are unambiguous, and it is difficult to believe he was the first to use the term in this useful sense. Modern English inconveniently lacks an equivalent.

Lampoon: a short, personally abusive poem, II.77, 78, 125n., 126, 133; cf. lampooner, II.127, 231.

Latinize: to adapt words from Latin into English, I.252. *See* romanize, *below*.

Lay: to design (a plot), I.38.

Licence: a poetic freedom, I.205, 206 (*licentia poetica*); II.161; a moral freedom, obscenity, II.267 (of Aphra Behn); cf. liberties, II.274 (of Homer).

Low: (of comedy), I.116, 145.

Machine: (1) a theatrical contrivance in the ancient theatre to introduce a god upon the stage, I.35; cf. Plato, *Cratylus*, 425D; Horace, *Ars poetica*, ll. 191-2; Aristophanes I.73n., *above*.
(2) any supernatural intrusion into a poem of any kind, I.222; II.68, 276 (Agamemnon's dream); in opera, II.35f.; in Milton, II.84; in Virgil, II.178; Christian machines, II.86f., 293; cf. Davenant, I.160n.; cf. poetical fictions, I.204; cf. machining persons, i.e. divine characters, II.233. This second, and essentially Renaissance, usage is first recorded in English in Rymer's Rapin preface of 1674, where he rejects Biblical subjects for English poets on the grounds that 'in the principal actions all is carried on by machine.' Dryden once uses the word in a still more general sense of 'any literary trick or device,' II.279. Cf. H. T. Swedenberg, 'Fable, Action, Unity, and Supernatural Machinery in English Epic Theory, 1650-1800,' *Englische Studien*, lxxiii (1938).

Manage: to work up, develop (a plot), I.38.

Manners: both the motives of characters, *and* the public's moral judgment of such motives, I.73, 219-20, 247, 248-9 (defined), 251; II.186, 228, 242; extended to outward description, II.278. The first recorded use, unless we accept the uncertain example in I.73, above, is in Rymer's Rapin preface of 1674, where Rymer commends Davenant for his 'particular talent for the manners: his thoughts are great, and there appears something roughly noble throughout this fragment,' i.e. *Gondibert*.

Masque: I.62.

Mechanic: of those aspects of poetry governed by rules, e.g. 'the mechanic beauties of poetry,' I.71; II.152, 161, 173, 188.

Memory: I.3, 8 & n. (Hobbes), 9, 98. *See* imagination (1), *above.*
Metaphor: the figure of analogy by replacement in rhetoric, I.39, 96, 200 ('hardest'), 257 (of Longinus); II.28 ('cleanliest'), 204, 244, 248 ('violent'), 121 ('boisterous'), 183, 233 ('strong'). Puttenham (III.xvii) calls it 'the figure of transport,' i.e. of transference.
Metaphrase: literal translation, I.xvi, 262, 268; II.246. Dryden also uses 'close,' II.164, and 'literal,' II.287. *See* imitation (2), *above, and* paraphrase, *below.*
Metaphysics: Donne 'affects the metaphysics,' II.76. Dryden never uses the term 'metaphysical' of Donne and his school, but this passage from the preface to Juvenal may be Johnson's source in the passage which established the usage in his Life of Cowley (1779): 'About the beginning of the seventeenth century appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets . . .,' though Wordsworth and Southey later objected (cf. G. Birkbeck Hill's edition of the *Lives* (1905), I.68). The earliest European use is perhaps in the Italian poet Testi's attack on Marino in 1627 for his 'concetti metaphysici' (cf. Grierson's *Donne* (1912), II.1); and the earliest use in English may be in a letter of William Drummond of *c.*1630. Cf. A. H. Nethercot, 'The Term "Metaphysical Poets" before Johnson,' *Modern Language Notes*, xxxvii (1922).
Mixed: of comedy, where Jonson's 'humour' and Fletcher's 'wit' are mingled, I.148-9.
Monologue: dramatic soliloquy, I.66.
Monster: a poetic creation out of, contrary to, nature, I.253; II.145, 190, 212, 275; cf. II.299 ('grotesque'), and Sheffield, II.186 & n. Most of these references are echoes of Horace's opening to the *Ars poetica*: 'Suppose a painter chose to couple a horse's neck with a human head . . .'
Moral: the moral substance, message, of a poem, I.248; II.50, 186, 291.
Mould: to work up thoughts (of a poet), I.25, 98. *See* drive, manage, *above.*

Narration: I.50, 62. *See* relation, *below.*
Natural: there is a special usage, derived directly from Corneille's third *Discours*, of the 'natural day,' I.70, i.e. a day of twenty-four hours (*see* artificial, *above*).
Nature: (1) kind, essence, description (Latin *natura*), II.82.
(2) the observable world, everything that is the case—'the dangerous sense,' C. S. Lewis—II.285; *hence* truth, especially general truth, I.3, 4, 33, 98, 192; II.15, 80, 183f., 280, 284 (on Chaucer). This is by far the commonest sense in Dryden. Cf. Johnson's preface to Shakespeare (1765), 'just representations of general nature.'
(3) man's unreasoning faculties, II.76: Donne 'affects the metaphysics . . . in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign.' Cf. *Conquest of Granada* (1672), Part I, II.i:

Reason's a staff for age when nature's gone.

A fourth sense, common since c18, perhaps an extension of (3), or the observable world excluding man and his works, does not occur in Dryden.
Cf. Hobbes, I.8n.; Robert Boyle, *A Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature* (1686), summarized by Johnson in his Dictionary (1755); A. O. Lovejoy, '*Nature* as Aesthetic Norm,' in his *Essays in the History of Ideas* (1948); and C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (1960), ch. ii.
Novel: a narrative, usually in verse, of marvellous events, I.57; II.271, 289.
Numbers: metre, metrical excellence, I.79, 84, 95, 141, 269; II.21, 131, 274; once equated with classical *rhythmus*, II.40; cf. numerousness, II.31 & n.; Cowley uses 'numerosity' i.e. metrical regularity, in the preface to his *Poems* (1656) (*Spingarn*, II.86).

Obsolete: of words, II.84.
Obscene, obscenity: I.223; II.27, 28, 115, 286, 293.
Octave rhyme: ottava rima, a stanza of eight lines rhyming ABABABCC, II.271 & n.—an unparalleled translation.
Opera: I.158, 195; II.34f., 35n., 230.

Panegyric: a poem in praise or celebration, I.101, 279; II.75, 202. *Eleonora* (1692) is described as intended 'not for an elegy but a panegyric,' II.61. Cf. panegyrical, II.31.
Paper of verses: a short, occasional poem, I.101; II.54.
Paranomasia: a pun, 'clench,' I.98.
Paraphrase: a free but relatively faithful translation, midway between 'metaphrase' and 'imitation', and Dryden's ideal as a translator, I.xvi, 268 (defined); II.152, 246. Cf. paraphrastically, II.163 (of Chapman's *Homer*). *See* imitation, metaphrase, *above.*
Pastoral: I.77; II.30.
Person: dramatic character, I.9, 33, 35, 61; II.161, 233.

Pindaric: (1) wild, obscure (of an ode), with lines of unequal length, I.84 & n.; II.31-2, 31n., 61. Cowley, in the preface to his *Poems* (1656), which contains the Pindaric Odes which Dryden, Pope, and Gray imitated and refined, described the Pindaric as digressive, with imagery 'unusual and bold, even to temerity' and metre 'various and irregular,' even 'harsh and uncouth' (*Spingarn*, II.86).
(2) an alexandrine, or line of six feet (though Dryden describes this usage as 'improper'), II.238, 247.
(3) wild, uncontrolled, ecstatic; cf. *Medal* (1682), 1.94, of the mob:
Thou leap'st o'er all eternal truths in thy Pindaric way!

Player: see actor, *above.*

Pleasant: amusing, I.148 ('Jonson's pleasantness was not properly wit, or the sharpness of conceit, but the natural imitation of folly'), I.274. But the modern sense of 'agreeable' is already breaking through, I.162.

Plot: I.2, 34, 65; single plot, i.e. plots without 'under-plots' or 'by-concernments,' characteristic of the French, I.59, 173; cf. *doppia favola*, translated as 'double tale,' a mixed plot, II.145, 173. Its use as a participle, 'plotting and writing,' I.3, is unusual, and perhaps a pun on Orrery's career as a statesman as well as dramatist. *See* episode, fable, *above.*

Poem: a literary work of any kind, II.44 (of *Don Sebastian*), as 'poet' may refer to the author of any such, I.77.

Poetaster: a trivial, contemptible poet, II.162. Cf. foot-poet, II.240.

Poetic justice: justice, especially the punishment of the vicious, at the end of a poem, I.150-2, 213, 215, 218, 222, 245, 258 (a pun); II.48. The earliest recorded use was by Rymer, I.245n.

Poetical: of a word, phrase, II.10, 21, 25, 26, 183.

Preface: I.133 & n., 279; II.85 & n.; cf. prefacer, II.255, 256 (of the author of the apocryphal verse introduction to the *Aeneid*).

Probability: conformity to 'nature' (2), above, I.62, 64, 79, 126, 161, 245; in Rapin, I.260; cf. Jonson, I.72n.; cf. likelihood, I.64.

Proposition: opening of a poem, II.228 & n. (of *Iliad*, ll. 1-2).

Propriety: I.155; II.13, 22, 254 (impropriety), 274, 278. *See* decorum, indecorum, *above, and* wit (4), *below.*

Prose: I.83, 139, 205.

Prosodia: (1) metrics, II.165. *See* numbers, *above.*
(2) a study of metrics, II.152, 236 & n.

Prosopopœia: personification, II. 27 & n.

Protasis: first, explanatory section of a play, 'entrance,' I.33; cf. protatic, I.50 & n.—the first, and almost the only, recorded use of the adjective in English.

Pun: I.139. *See* clench, paranomasia, *above.*

Quantity: the length of syllables as a metrical unit in Latin, I.83, 95. Dryden once applies the term to English poetry, II.237, though he contrasts it with English 'accent,' I.83.

Quatrain: a four-line stanza rhyming ABAB, as in Davenant's *Gondibert* (1650) and Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*, (1667), I.95. Davenant had preferred to call it a 'stanza of four (*Spingarn*, II.19).

Raillery: abuse; cf. fine raillery, II.136 & n., 137.

Recitative: narrative and dialogue part of opera, between arias, II.38, 39; cf. II.34 (note). Dryden once speaks of 'recitative music' to describe Davenant's opera *The Siege of Rhodes*, I.158.

Regular: observing the dramatic unities (of a play), I.35, 56, 105 & n.; II.49, 171; irregular(ity), I.62, 65, 222. Cf. thorough, II.51.

Relation: story, narration, I.50, 51, 62-3; II.49. *See* narration, *above.*

Repartee: I.8, 60, 68, 79, 88, 99, 149, 223; II.198.

Retrench: to reduce (images), I.25; II.61.

Rhetoric: (1) oratory, persuasion, I.9.
(2) study of style, especially of imagery, I.201; cf. *Mac Flecknoe* (1682), 1.161: 'false flowers of rhetoric.'

Rhyme: I.5f., 81f., 112f., 156f.; cf. burlesque rhyme, i.e. rhyme of more than one syllable, for comic effect, II.148 & n.; cf. double rhyme, i.e. rhyme of two syllables, II.40; female rhyme (=double), I.96; II.38; triplet rhyme, i.e. three lines rhyming instead of the usual two in heroic couplets, the last often an alexandrine, II.247 & n.

Ridiculous: I.72 & n.

Romanize: to adapt words from Latin into English, I.70. *See* latinize, *above.*

Rules: the dramatic rules allegedly proposed by Aristotle in the *Poetics*, especially the three unities, I.32, 44, 107, 200.
Running the sense into another line: enjambement, I.84. Modern English lacks word or phrase to describe this metrical fact. Cf. well-running verses, II.237.

Satire: (1) a kind of poem which mocks or abuses vice and frailty, II.97f., 116, 136 & n., 137, 143 (defined), 259, 265, 283.
(2) the spirit and manner of such poems, I.119, 199; II.63.
Saturnian: 'a gross and rustic kind of raillery' in ancient satire, 'Fescennine,' II.99 & n., 106f.
Scene: (1) stage, theatre (Latin *scena*), I.134 & n.; II.229. Dryden also uses 'stage,' II.233.
(2) a play, I.5.
(3) part of a play, I.37 (defined in French terms). *See* act, *above.*
(4) scenery, I.80, 125; II.35, 41.
Scenary: scenario, sketch for a play, I.232; II.200 & n.
Scription: writing, poem, II.162 & n.
Sentence: (1) short, pithy statement, maxim (Latin *sententia*), I.98, 233; II.5, 46.
(2) unit of syntax (modern sense), II.141.
Simile: the rhetorical figure of open analogy ('as . . ., like . . .,' etc.), I.256, 257.
Similitude: image, usually a simile, I.59, 127, 155; II.4, 30, 46, 140, 204, 219; cf. Hobbes, 'the admirable variety and novelty of metaphors and similitudes' (*Spingarn*, II.65).
Sock: see buskin, *above.*
Solecism: abuse or impropriety of language, I. 171, 197.
Songish part: operatic aria, II.35; cf. lyrical part, II.39.
Sounding: resonant (of a word), I.171, 239n., 260; II.84.
Species: see idea, *above.*
Spondee: a Latin foot of two long syllables, I.83, 95; II.154.
Staff: stanza, II.248.
Stanza: II.31, 248.
Sublime: high in style, proper to moral grandeur, I.196, 197, 207, 259, 277; II.10, 25, 61 ('sublimity of thought'), 121, 243 ('the true sublime'). The word enters Dryden's critical vocabulary soon after the appearance of Boileau's translation of Longinus, *Traité du sublime* (1674).
Success: I.47; II.102. *See* catastrophe, *above.*
Suspense: expectancy, anticipation, I.30. The word has been common since the c15—cf. Milton, *Samson Agonistes* (1671), l. 1569:

Suspense in news is torture; speak them out;

and Dryden, *Aeneis* (1697), xii. 1360:

In deep suspense the Trojan seem'd to stand.

But there is no recorded use of the word in a theatrical context until here, where Dryden follows Corneille, I.30n.
Sweet(ness): of the sound of verse, II.21 (where 'sugar' and 'honey' are compared), 234 (Virgil *v.* Ovid).
Synalœpha: elision, 'the cutting off one vowel immediately before another', II.22, 164 & n., 165 (defined).
Synchysis: false syntactical order, 'ill placing of words,' I.174 & n.
Syntax: I.175.

Tautology: superfluous repetition, II.54.
Theme: (1) story, plot, I.59, 143. Cf. Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, I.iii, 127-9:

Two truths are told
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme;

and Davenant on *Gondibert* (1650): 'I was likewise more willing to derive my theme from elder times . . .' (*Spingarn*, II.11).
(2) subject, message. Cf. *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), l. 238, and *Hind and Panther* (1687), l. 1328. But there is no clear instance of this modern sense, a favourite of c20 critics, in Dryden's criticism.
Tragedy: I.199, 243; its objects, I.41, 87, 213.
Tragi-comedy: mixed play, tragic and comic, characteristic of English, I.45, 58-9, 105 & n., 244 (condemned), 274-5, 275n., 278-9.
Translation: see Index, *below, and* imitation (2), metaphrase, paraphrase, *above.*
Trimeter: a line of three feet, II.110, 238.

Trochee, trochaic: a foot of two syllables, the first stressed, I.83; II.113 (the earliest recorded use of 'trochaic' as a noun).

Trope: a figure of speech, I.99, 200, 206 (*v.* figure); II.121 (=metaphor), 204 (where it seems to include metaphor). A more particular term than 'figure,' above, from which it is to be distinguished only with difficulty. Quintilian (VIII.vi) defines *tropus* as 'the effective alteration' (*cum virtute mutatio*) of a word or phrase from its usual meaning, e.g. metaphor, catachresis; he confesses that it is difficult to distinguish it from *figura*, which seems to include *tropus*, but 'does not necessarily mean any change in order or in literal sense.' Cf. Dryden's *Persius*, I.160-1:

Bring trifling tropes instead of solid sense,
And mind their figures more than their defence.

Turn: (1) a minor movement of thought or of plot, I.52, 57, 65, 251; II.49. *See* counter-turn, *above*.
(2) a stylistic grace or characteristic idiom, I.271; II.3, 10, 94, 111, 149, 150, 164; *bien tourné*, II.151.

Unbroken scenes: liaison de scènes (from Corneille's third *Discours*), I.64, 108, 141, 240. *See* break, *above*.

Under-plot: sub-plot, I.30, 45, 59, 76, 222; II.49, 145, 161; cf. under-action, i.e. episode in epic, II. 225; under-part, II.51.

Unities: the dramatic unities of time, place, and action, allegedly in Aristotle's *Poetics*, I.27 (earliest recorded use), 27n., 28, 63f., 108; II.49 ('three mechanic rules of unity'). *See* Index, *below*, *and* rules, *above*.

Unravelling: I.33 (earliest recorded use as a dramatic term, to translate Corneille's *dénouement*), 54. Horace (*Ars poetica*, 1.191) had used *nodus* (knot) to describe the crux of a play. *See* catastrophe, *above*.

Untying: I.74; cf. II.207 ('which was the knot of the play untied'). *See* catastrophe, unravelling, *above*.

Ut pictura, poesis: 'as in a painting, so in poetry,' Horace, *Ars poetica*, 1.361—the Renaissance doctrine that poetry and painting are parallel arts, discussed in note, II.181 & f. —I.3, 47, 114 & n.; II.19-20 (transferred to translation), 242; rebutted by Lessing, II.187n. Cf. Hobbes, 'Poets are painters . . .' (*Spingarn*, II.61; cf. *ibid.*, p. 71); W. G. Howard '*Ut pictura poesis*', *PMLA* xxiv (1909); T. J. B. Spencer, 'The Imperfect Parallel betwixt Painting and Poetry,' *Greece & Rome*, ser. 2, vii (1960).

Verisimility: likeness to 'nature' (2), above, I.47, 87. Hobbes calls it 'the resemblance of truth' (*Spingarn*, II.62). *See* probability, *above*.

Verse: (1) a line of poetry (Latin *versus*), I.34, 205; II.31, 167.
(2) poetry, as opposed to prose, II.15, 113 & n. (?); cf. Sidney, I.7n.
(3) metre, II.14, 281.
(4) rhyme, I.5, 13, 16, 81, 113 & n.(?).
See blank verse, *above*.

Versification: metre, metrical excellence, II.21 & n. (earliest recorded use in sense of 'metre'), 75, 131, 147, 165, 168, 235, 236f., 254. *See* numbers, *above*.

Versifier: a poet considered in respect of his metre (apparently neutral), II.270.

Villain: an evil man or dramatic character, I.248; II.136. Dryden nowhere uses the term in a clear technical sense to correspond to 'hero,' above. The first such recorded use is no earlier than Charles Lamb, 'Old Actors,' in *Elia* (1822).

Walk: an aspect of plot, sub-plot, I.153; II.145 ('second walk'); cf. by-walk, I.76.

Wit: (1) intelligence (the primary sense), I.19, 76(?), 85, 235; II.129, 168. This sense survives into the c18 (and even later in fixed contexts), and is the commonest sense in Dryden's poetry, e.g. *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), ll. 153, 162, 386, 653.
(2) a man of wit (often capitalized), I.15, 16, 70, 108, 109, 226. Cf. Court Wits, I.186f.
(3) comic faculty, *from* (1), I.19, 60, 68(?), 136(?), 152, 199(?); II.28, 122, 198 (C. S. Lewis's 'dangerous sense').
(4) propriety of thought and words, I.38-9, 40, 69(?), 98 ('wit-writing,' or 'imagination'), 99, 142, 207 (defined); II.22, 34, 127; cf. tragedy of wit, I.193. *See* imagination, *above*.

(1) remains the most natural usage in Dryden, with (2) an obvious extension. (3) is consciously resisted, though Dryden uses it, no doubt unconsciously, from beginning to end, and (4) is a matter for deliberate definition—a sure symptom that it is not acclimatized. Cf. II.163, where (3) and (4) are contrasted. He had many attempts at critical re-definition to work upon, e.g. Cowley's 'Of Wit; an Ode' (1656), Davenant's preface to *Gondibert* ('a dexterity of thought,' 'the laborious and lucky [i.e. felicitous]

resultances of thought'). Dryden at first prided himself upon his definition (4) as 'propriety,' II.210, but later came to believe it was Aristotelian, II.211 & n. It was admired and contested for years after; cf. Pope's letter to Wycherley (26 December 1704): 'True wit, I believe, may be defined as greatness of thought, and a faculty of expression'; cf. his *Essay on Criticism* (1711); and Addison, *Spectator* no. 62. Cf. W. L. Ustick and H. H. Hudson, 'Wit, Mixt Wit, and the Bee in Amber,' *Huntington Library Bulletin*, no. 8 (1935); Scott Elledge, 'Cowley's Ode and Longinus,' *Modern Language Quarterly*, ix (1948); William Empson, 'Wit in the *Essay on Criticism*' in his *Structure of Complex Words* (1951); *Kinsley*, p. 1956, who distinguishes three uses within (4); and C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (1960), ch. iv.

Witticism: a poor joke, I.205 & n. (coined by Dryden on the analogy of 'criticism'); II.82.

Word: I.2; II.2. Word-thing dualism, implicit in 'wit' (4), above, is common in classical and neoclassical criticism, though Quintilian had insisted that 'generally the best words are inseparable from their things and are discovered by their light' (VIII). Cf. II.288: 'Words are not like landmarks, so sacred as never to be removed . . .' Bacon, in the *Advancement of Learning* (1605), Bk I, complains of the Elizabethans that 'men began to hunt more after words than matter,' an objection developed by Hobbes in *Leviathan* (1651), ch.iii; cf. Cowley's 'Ode to the Royal Society,' on the New Philosophy:

> From words, which are but pictures of the thought
> (Though we our thoughts from them perversely drew)
> To things, the mind's right object, he it brought . . .

Cf. A. C. Howell, '*Res et verba*: Words and Things,' *ELH*, xiii (1946).

Work up: to develop (a plot), I.33, 101; II.48; cf. over-wrought, under-wrought, II.207 (of poetic style), and Rymer, II.160n.

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Macaulay's position is perhaps too well known to endorse. His *Critical and Historical Essays* contain a new Introduction by Douglas Jerrold (Nos. 225–6), and a volume of *Miscellaneous Essays* (No. 439), introduced by Professor G. M. Trevelyan, O.M., is included.

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